

Newton's Law: Cam Keeps Going Up, Up, Up By AUSTIN MURPHY P. 31

Plus SUPER BOWL 100 = LAS VEGAS VS. BARCELONA + JOÃO MONTANA + PRESIDENT GRONKOWSKI + BY STEVE RUSHIN P. 38

February 1, 2016

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VON MILLER
TURNED IN AN
EPIC 2½-SACK,
ONE-INTERCEPTION
DAY AS THE
BRONCOS HIT TOM
BRADY 23 TIMES.

SUPER BOWL 50

ORANGE RUSH

Peyton Manning Will Be
The Super Bowl Narrative,
But the **Broncos'**
Soul-Crushing D
Is the Story

By **GREG BISHOP** P. 26



Jess Hyland, City Explorer

Underground dumpling shop in Chinatown.
Rooftop art exhibit in Portland. My schedule
is full to the brim with culture. AT&T connects
my smartwatch to my calendar, so I know to
leave Shakespeare in the Parking Lot in time
for my reservation at the pop-up pizza parlor.

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★★★ NFL ★★★ CHAMPIONSHIPS

26 The Broncos

Denver is headed back to the Super Bowl because of a pressure-cooker defense and a near perfect punter
By Greg Bishop

31 The Panthers

A revolutionizing QB and his team full of outcasts strut into the big game as favorites to win their first title

By Austin Murphy

- Breaking down SB 50's most important one-on-one matchups
- How lineman Caylin Hauptmann won two rings without suiting up

38 SB 100

In the culmination of a seasonlong project between SI and *Wired*, **Steve Rushin** offers a dispatch from the Super Bowl in 2066

Presented by Gatorade and Microsoft Surface

Departments

- 4 **SI Now**
- 6 **Leading Off**
- 14 **Inbox**
- 16 **Editor's Letter**
- 18 **Scorecard**
- 23 **Faces in The Crowd**
- 24 **Just My Type**
Dan Patrick:
Antwaan Randle El on life after the NFL
- 64 **Point After**
Michael Rosenberg:
The troubled water of Flint, Mich.

SI HAS REGIONAL COVERS THIS WEEK:
DONALD MIRALLE FOR SPORTS ILLUSTRATED (VON MILLER); CHRIS KEANE FOR SPORTS ILLUSTRATED (CAM NEWTON)



PHOTOGRAPH BY
Jeff Haynes
For Sports Illustrated

PRO BASKETBALL

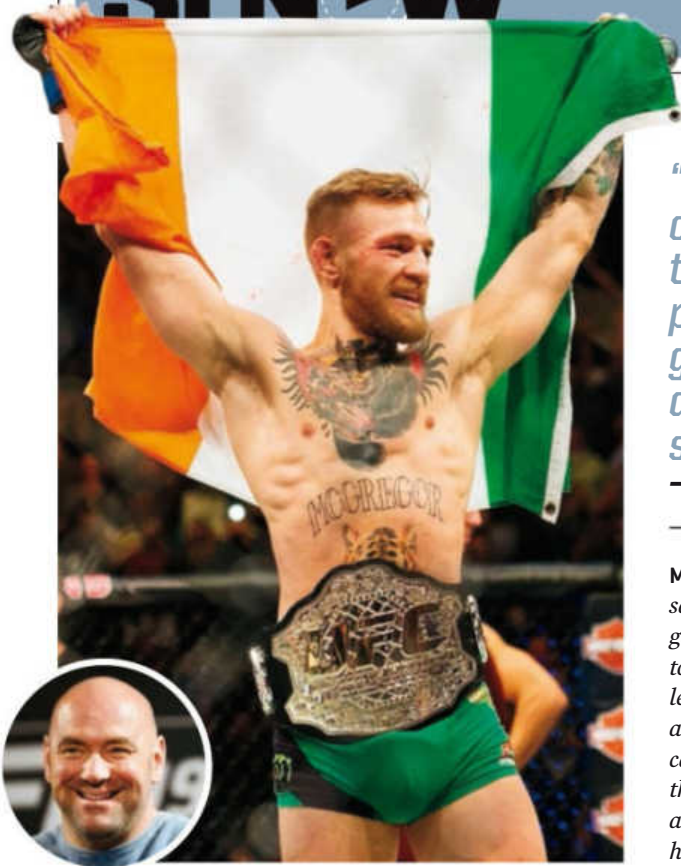
48 Rudy Gobert

The Stifle Tower's monumental defense in Utah has changed views about French players
By Ben Reiter

BASEBALL

54 Terry Collins

It took the Mets' manager four decades to get to the World Series. Now one decision defines him
By Tom Verducci



"If this guy can even throw a punch, he's going to be a huge superstar."

—Dana White

DANA WHITE The UFC president discusses what makes 27-year-old Conor McGregor, who in December knocked out José Aldo in 13 seconds to claim the featherweight title, such a big star.

MAGGIE GRAY: How valuable is Conor McGregor to UFC?

DANA WHITE: Conor is a special individual. He's a guy who is making an impact on MMA in a completely different way than Ronda [Rousey] did. Obviously, coming from Ireland, he's created a lot of steam in Europe but also in Australia and other parts of the world, including here

in the United States.

MG: McGregor recently posted a photo on Instagram that showed him wearing a mask and pointing a submachine gun outside the window of a car.

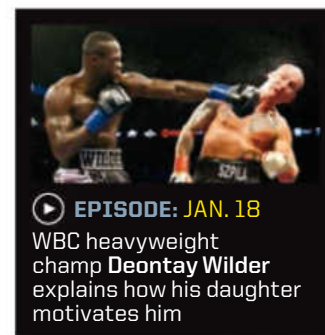
DW: It wasn't a real gun; it was a fake gun. Obviously not a great choice of pictures to post on Instagram, of course, but, hey, at least it wasn't a real gun and he was just doing it for a movie.

MG: José Aldo recently said, "I think they [UFC] gave him [McGregor] too much power. They let him grow a lot, and he's playing now, calling the shots more than the others." Is there any truth to that? Does he have more power than other fighters?

DW: Conor is who Conor is. If Conor acted like everybody else, he wouldn't be Conor. Every once in a while a special individual pops up in this sport. That's Conor. The first night I ever went to dinner with Conor McGregor, I called my business partner Lorenzo [Fertitta] and said, "I don't know how well this guy can fight, but if this guy can even throw a punch, he's going to be a huge superstar." He is a unique individual. □

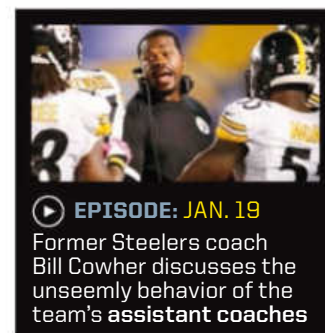
For more of White's interview, plus the SI Now archives, go to **SI.com/sinow**

TUNE IN



EPISODE: JAN. 18

WBC heavyweight champ **Deontay Wilder** explains how his daughter motivates him



EPISODE: JAN. 19

Former Steelers coach **Bill Cowher** discusses the unseemly behavior of the team's assistant coaches



EPISODE: JAN. 20

SI special contributor **Steve Rushin** tells why concussions won't be enough to end football



EPISODE: JAN. 21

SI.com's **Melissa Jacobs** examines the hiring of the NFL's first female assistant coach, **Kathryn Smith**

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1
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Leading Off

YEARS
OF SUPER BOWL
PHOTOS

Four photographers who have shot almost* every Super Bowl pick their favorite images and share what they love about them

TONY TOMSIC

Super Bowl I

Jan. 15, 1967, at Los Angeles
Packers 35, Chiefs 10

 I went to the game on my own dime—got a round-trip ticket from Cleveland to Los Angeles for \$116. I knew Green Bay was a straight-ahead, smashmouth football team, and I knew they would run the sweep. So on a couple of drives early in the game I moved after the ball was snapped, which is unheard of now. There were so few photographers and we had so much freedom.

As Packers quarterback Bart Starr dropped back, I went around the corner of the end zone to get this shot. If you did that now, you'd trip over wires and God knows what. I didn't pick up Max McGee [85] until the very end. It was a long pass [a 13-yarder to make it 28-10].

There were other pictures I missed during the game because I was just having a good time. The ambience was almost like a high school game. It was just beautiful, festive—middle of the day, the sun was out, old-fashioned football.

**Tomsic missed Super Bowl XLIX due to illness*



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2
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Leading Off

YEARS
OF SUPER BOWL
PHOTOS**WALTER IOOSS JR.*****Super Bowl IV****Jan. 11, 1970, at New Orleans
Chiefs 23, Vikings 7*

 You see old Tulane Stadium in the background, the sun setting, back when games were played in daylight. When you shoot vertically, you think *cover*, but it's not good for football because you're eliminating everything except a player or two. This didn't make the cover, but because of the combination of the moment and the sky, I shot it vertically.

The end of the game is so interesting and so important in sports. What happens when it's over, and teams rejoice or lament? Hank Stram's and quarterback Len Dawson's hands about to meet, congratulating each other on the victory—it's sort of perfect. You really get a feel for the stadium and the moment. Even Robert Holmes—his body and hand reaching in—leads you right into Stram's and Dawson's hands. All the pictures come down to about a five-hundredths of a second. If their hands clasped, it was already over. And if Dawson were a half step farther to the center of the field, it wouldn't be interesting.

50

YEARS
OF SUPER BOWL
PHOTOS

Leading Off

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3
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MICKEY PALMER

Super Bowl XLII

Feb. 3, 2008, at Glendale, Ariz.

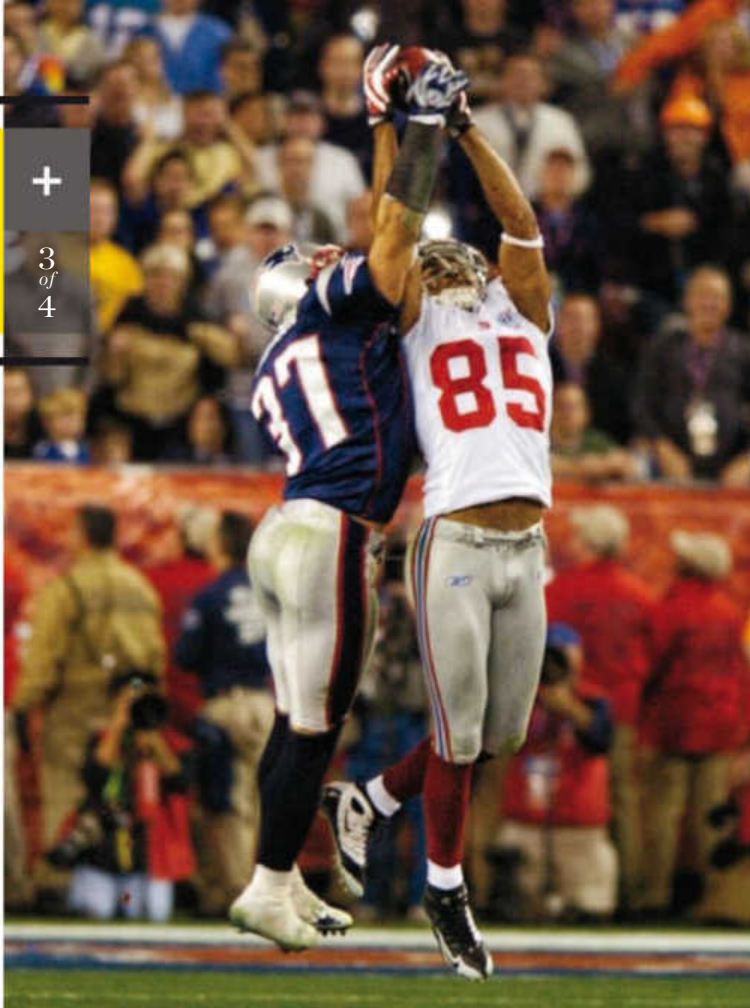
Giants 17, Patriots 14

 I was focusing on Giants quarterback Eli Manning on this drive because the Patriots' defense was all over him and he was scrambling all over the place. And then I turned my camera real fast, and I was on the shot. I was very lucky to get it. I saw Manning scramble, so I figured I'd follow where he was throwing the ball.

Right after I took the shot, I realized I'd got it. I was hoping it was sharp, because I was moving so fast, turning the camera to follow the play. It's the whole sequence of the shot. How receiver David Tyree went up, caught the ball on the back of his head and held onto it.

Throughout the game I had been going crazy because I was on both sides of the field. First I thought New England was going to win, then I thought New York was going to win, then I thought New England was going to win. So I was basically going crazy.

I was just hoping to get a good picture. A lot of it is luck, a lot of it is being at the right spot at the right time.





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■ SI has been there for every Super Bowl, from I to XLIX. Filter by team, see all the best touchdowns and sacks and relive the most memorable moments with our interactive photo gallery at SI.com/SB-photos



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Leading Off

YEARS
OF SUPER BOWL
PHOTOS**JOHN BIEVER*****Super Bowl XXII****Jan. 31, 1988, at San Diego
Redskins 42, Broncos 10*

 Redskins quarterback Doug Williams was injured on this play early in the first quarter, and then he came back and was the game's MVP, so there's a good story to the photo.

Everything came together for this shot. The game was in San Diego, in the late afternoon, so there was some really rich light. And there's the composition—with the Denver defender [Rulon Jones] coming in, the flow of the picture moves toward Williams, and then to his mouth, which is wide open.

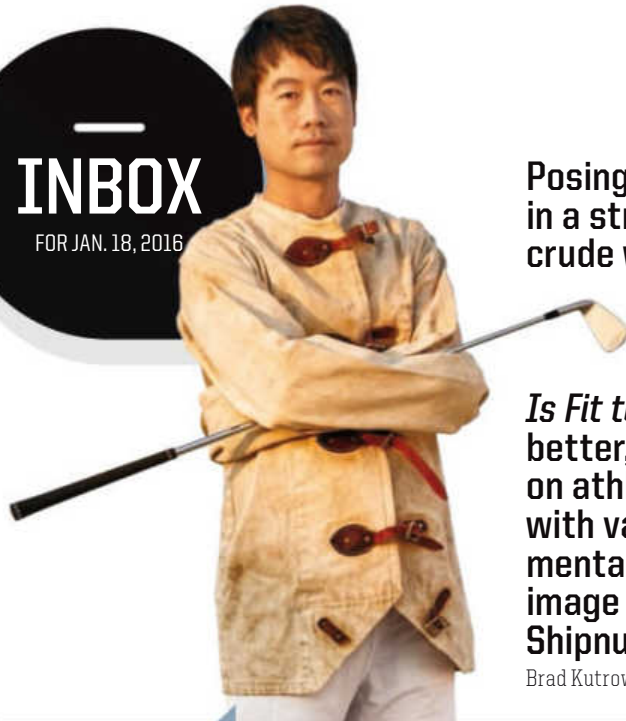
You can't see Williams's eyes, but I don't think you need to because of his mouth. If it isn't open in this picture, or his leg isn't tucked in, it wouldn't work. And a second later the defender would be in his way, which would have wrecked it. It's got to be that exact moment. The fleeting moment.

In that game I was floating, meaning I was able to go wherever I wanted. Now they have us all assigned to specific spots, but sometimes that leads to a great picture because your location happens to be the best spot for a particular play.



INBOX

FOR JAN. 18, 2016



Posing golfer **Kevin Na** in a straitjacket was a crude way to illustrate his struggles with the mental aspects of his game (*Kevin Na Is Fit to Be Tied*). SI can do better, as it has in reporting on athletes who have dealt with various forms of mental illness. The clumsy image undermined Alan Shipnuck's thoughtful story.

Brad Kutrow, Charlotte

It was disappointing to read that Steve Williams—who never learned that caddies should be seen and not heard—found it appropriate to chastise Na at a tournament. While Na may have only one Tour victory, that number is still greater than the number of people who have attended a PGA event to watch Williams replace divots.

David Burton, Clovis, Calif.



Steve Rushin depicted very well what many of us Minnesotans have gone through over the decades. However, I would add one more game to his list of Vikings heartbreakers (SCORECARD): the loss to Arizona in the 2003 regular-season finale, when a last-second TD pass knocked Minnesota from the playoffs. Many of us still hear broadcaster Paul Allen yell, "No!" in agony every time a nightmare like the **Blair Walsh** kick occurs.

Kirk Talley, St. Paul

Anyone who thinks **Vontaze Burfict** wasn't aiming for Antonio Brown's head should look at this photo (LEADING OFF). With his history of cheap shots, Burfict should be banned from the NFL after this latest display.

Randy Schiffman
Wausau, Wis.



EDITOR'S NOTE: The Bengals linebacker was suspended for the first three games of 2016.



COVER

With all due respect to Alabama, you had the wrong college football dynasty on your cover. North Dakota State won a record fifth straight FCS championship, but the Bison got only 35 words in GO FIGURE.

Jeremy Wurgler
Fargo, N.D.

PAGE 32

I found some of Mike Holmgren's comments in the story on NFL referees (*Catching Hell*)—e.g., "Humans play the game, humans should officiate it"—ironic given his history. When the Seahawks lost Super Bowl XL to the Steelers, he engaged in quite a bit of public venting about the refs.

Jeff Mostrando
Midlothian, Va.



PAGE 60

POINT AFTER
Boomer Esiason's column read as a sophomoric attempt to list Peyton Manning's failures. While Manning may have a poor winning percentage in his 15 postseason appearances, that's still 13 more appearances than Boomer made.

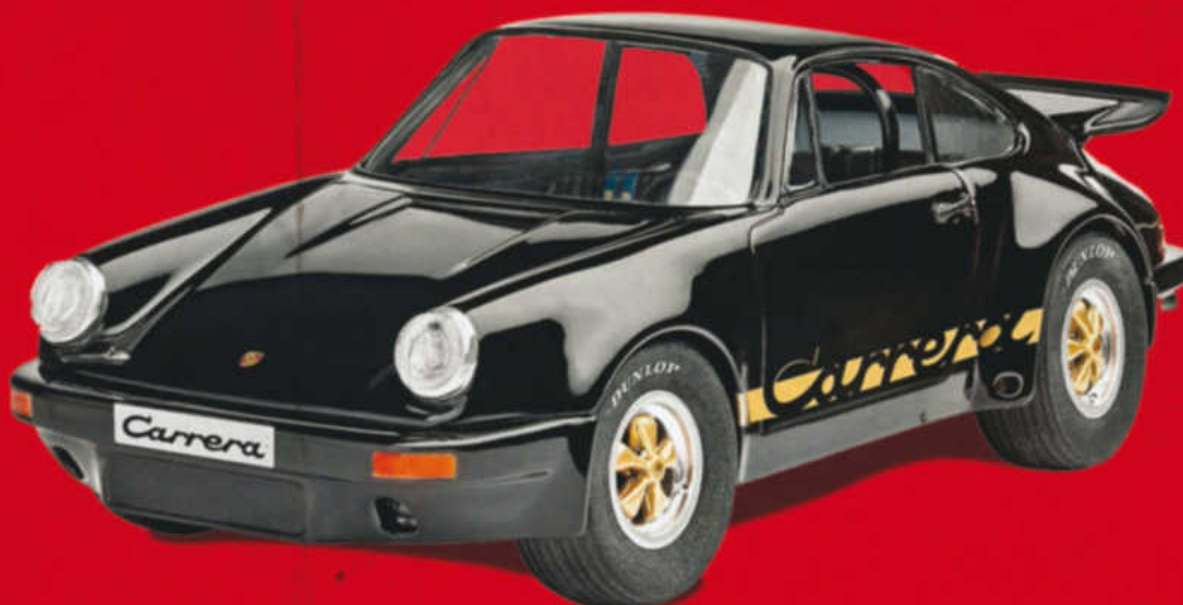
Craig Clifford
Tempe, Ariz.

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SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

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Super Bowl 100

→ BY CHRISTIAN STONE



Robot taxi squads, hoverboards and \$75 beers: examining the future of North America's biggest sport.

walk SI's great ink-stained earth; he is also one of its most tireless researchers and inquisitors. In his piece he resists the urge to divine a future solely from his imagination. Here he was aided by the scientific expertise of SI reporter Tom Taylor and *Wired*'s Brad Stenger, who could explain to Rushin, for example, the implications of gene mapping on the NFL. "My job was to imagine what Super Bowl 100 would look and sound and smell like," Rushin says, "I wanted the story to be like a futuristic pulp sci-fi novel of the 1950s, set on the planet Zorg. But it had to be grounded in real science, with plausible predictions from experts in their fields."

"There was a temptation, quickly resisted, to make the game unrecognizable. But football in 2016 is still recognizably the same game it was in 1966. There's no reason to think that the next 50 years will make it something else entirely."

ON JAN. 27, 1986, Tom Buerger walked into SI's Chicago sales office for his first day with the company. The place was virtually empty. "It was the day after the Bears clobbered the Patriots in Super Bowl XX," Buerger says. "Everyone was in New Orleans. I'm just sitting in the empty office wondering how long I'm going to stay here." Wednesday is 30 years to that day, and Buerger is still with SI, moving mountains as the director of the franchise's second-biggest sales office. He brought the idea of the *Wired* collaboration to Gatorade, who along with Microsoft Surface is a presenting sponsor of the program, the largest collaboration SI has undertaken with an outside publication. "World-class talent and

the greatest teammate I've had," offers Buerger's close friend, Boston sales director John Cooney. "As a Packers fan, he'll hate the analogy, but he's our Tom Brady." □



ON SEPT. 3, 1979, SPORTS ILLUSTRATED ran a cover story titled *Gridiron 2000* that offered a portrait of fin de siècle football. It was, even by the standards of the day, a fairly conservative vision, its more astute predictions including "a better strain of artificial turf will have been developed," "there will be some form of legal betting," and "rosters will grow, but the schedule will not."

More daring, but less prescient, were visions of quarterbacks, some of them women, throwing balls 135 yards on a line with the assistance of mechanized power packs attached to their arms; and the prediction by then Cowboys GM Tex Schramm that there will be "no mistakes on draft choices." There also were hints of the public safety issue that has come to define Gridiron 2016. "Bigger players will be able to move even faster and hit even harder wearing it," Frank Deford wrote, referring to the development and use of lighter, more pliable padding. "At the same time, there is the potential for even greater damage to limb if not life."

Three decades later, as a young reporter at SI, Adam Duerson would pore through the five-inch-thick bound volumes of the magazine. A Wisconsin-born but Midway-bred fan who would name his first child Bear, Duerson came across the Deford piece, drawn to it as much for the art that accompanied the story as its prose. "Robot-like Supermen wearing booster shoes and suction-

cup gloves," Duerson says. "The imagery was so cheesy, but it struck a nerve for me, since my interests lie at the intersection of Bart Starr and *Star Wars*."

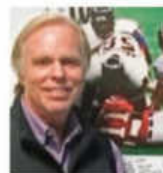
Now an assistant managing editor who oversees the franchise's NFL coverage, Duerson recognized an opportunity. With the approach of Super Bowl 50, Duerson wanted to go back to the future with a look at how Super Bowl 100 might unspool. Thus was born the anchor of a five-month collaboration with *Wired* in which the two titles examined the future of North America's biggest sport, from what the football stadium of the future will look like to how athletes will train in 2066 to Steve Rushin's masterpiece on Super Bowl 100 that begins on page 38.

Rushin is one of the most facile writers to

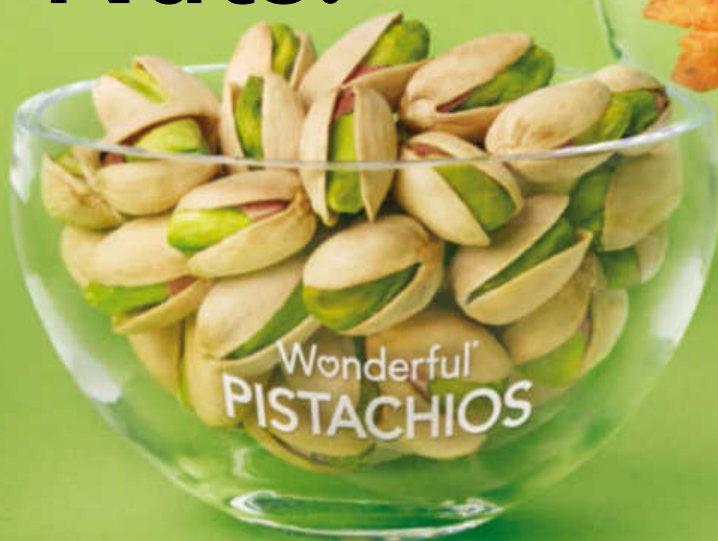


KEEP IT 100

Duerson (above) and Buerger (below) helped SI envision a Super future.



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Edited by JIM GORANT + TED KEITH

SCORECARD

Finals Jeopardy

David Blatt was a victim of expectations in Cleveland, where LeBron James isn't the only one obsessed with winning it all

BY LEE JENKINS

A WALL-SIZED photograph of Cleveland's Quicken Loans Arena, taken moments before an NBA Finals game last June, hangs in David Griffin's office. In the photo the seats are full and the fans are waving blue glow sticks. It is suggested to Griffin, the Cavaliers' general manager, that this is the moment he wishes to re-create. "No," he replies. "I hate this picture." Every morning, when he reports to work at the Cavs' practice facility, the image greets him and taunts him. "It only reminds me," he says, "that we lost."

Griffin and LeBron James relate on several levels, but this is the most fundamental one: Reaching the Finals is not enough. James did not return to Cleveland

from Miami two summers ago, and Griffin did not sign off on a nearly \$110 million payroll this year, to be the Warriors' patsies. After Golden State beat Cleveland for the championship last year, Warriors guard Leandro Barbosa spotted Griffin in the hallways outside the visiting locker room. Barbosa, who befriended Griffin when they were both in Phoenix, wrapped him in a jubilant hug. As Griffin walked to his car, he smelled the champagne on his shirt and made a face at the fumes. "I'm never doing this again," he told his wife, Meredith.

But that's where the Cavaliers appeared headed. They had the East's best record under coach David Blatt, and even after they fired him last Friday,

they're still likely to fetch the conference's top seed. Yet it was clear in a 99-95 road loss to the Spurs on Jan. 14 and a 132-98 obliteration by the Warriors on Jan. 18 in *Cleveland*, that the Cavs remain far short of the only standard that really matters.

"I think this team is in pretty good position," Blatt said last Thursday as he chided reporters for hyperventilating over the Golden State rout. "Frankly, *pretty good* is not what we're here for," Griffin clarified the next day in a press conference announcing Blatt's ouster. "I'm not leaving an unprecedented team payroll to chance." Of course, that is exactly what he's doing, by replacing an experienced strategist in Blatt with a rookie head coach in Tyronn Lue. If he

wanted to minimize risk, he could have reached out to Tom Thibodeau, who led the Bulls to the playoffs in all five of his seasons with Chicago and is taking the year off after being fired last May.

But if you ask Warriors coach Steve Kerr or Spurs coach Gregg Popovich, implementing strategy is not as important as building culture. That's where Blatt fell short and Lue showed promise as a Cavs assistant, developing trust with veterans while remaining loyal to his boss.

Griffin, who worked with Kerr, then the Suns' GM, for three years in Phoenix, kept returning



HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES



to two terms at his press conference: *spirit* and *connectedness*, concepts hard to define but easy to recognize. The Warriors embody these qualities. So do the Spurs. The Cavaliers do not. For months Griffin worried that the Cavs operated without joy, even when they won.

Asking the 38-year-old Lue to create esprit de corps by the time the playoffs start in April is asking a ton. But it was not happening under Blatt. Griffin swore he acted alone on Friday and, obviously, no one believed him. The narrative in Cleveland, real or perceived, was set the

day James returned: The organization writes the checks; he makes the calls.

Still, Griffin is not the kind of GM who cowers behind his computer. He travels with the team, spends time in the locker room, plops down next to guys at the cold tub. "I didn't ask anybody's opinion," he said. He didn't have to.

Griffin hired Blatt from Israel in June 2014 to guide a young roster, led by Kyrie Irving, Tristan Thompson and Andrew Wiggins, that was praying for an eighth seed. Three weeks later James announced his return to Cleveland, changing the franchise

and Blatt's job description. He didn't have to develop talent. He needed to win hardware. The subtle undermining from James did not help, though he became more supportive of Blatt this season.

Perhaps Griffin overreacted, firing a coach who had won 67.5% of his games, who steered Cleveland through last year's playoffs without Kevin Love and through the first two months of this season without Irving. Normally a 30-11 start would warrant ovations and extensions, but the Warriors (40-4 through Sunday) and Spurs (38-6) have shrunk everybody's margins.

About this time a year ago Griffin acquired center Timofey Mozgov from the Nuggets, along with guards Iman Shumpert and J.R. Smith from the Knicks. The deals effectively saved Cleveland's season. Again, the GM is putting himself in the crosshairs, right next to his star. Such is life with LeBron James: high drama, high stakes.

Five months from now the Cavaliers will probably end up in an identical spot as they would have under Blatt: in the Finals, against the Warriors, surrounded by all those glow sticks. Chances are the final, haunting image will come out the same. But the Cavs made clear on Friday they'll do anything to change it. □



World Cup downhill victories for Lindsey Vonn, who broke the career record of 36 held for 35 years by Austria's Annemarie Moser-Proell. Vonn won the downhill on Saturday and the Super-G on Sunday in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, and has won 75 World Cup races overall, 11 shy of the record held by Sweden's Ingemar Stenmark.

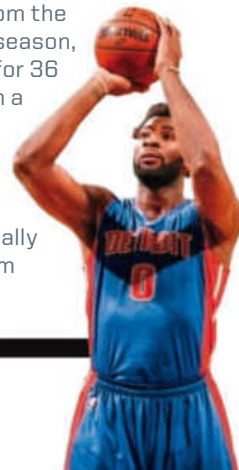
350

Wins as North Carolina's head coach by Roy Williams, making him the first coach in Division I history with at least that many at two schools. Williams won 418 games at Kansas from 1988-89 through 2002-03.



23

Missed free throws for Pistons center Andre Drummond on Jan. 20, the most in one game in NBA history. Drummond, who is shooting 35.4% from the line this season, went 13 for 36 (36.1%) in a 123-114 win over Houston, which intentionally fouled him 21 times.



Air Power

Updating the world's most iconic sneaker

IT'S BEEN ALMOST 13 years since Michael Jordan last played in the NBA, yet more people than ever want to be like Mike. Nike's Jordan Brand, which pulled in \$2.6 billion in 2014, will release the 30th edition of the Air Jordan sneaker on Feb. 12. Here are four things to know about the shoe that changed the game.



1 OUT OF THIS WORLD

The inspiration for the AJXXX started in February 2015 with a doodle (*above*) from designer Tinker Hatfield, who thought of His Airness as "an alien of sorts."

2 "FERRARI FOR THE COURT"

That's what Hatfield, who has designed a majority of the Air Jordans, calls his latest creation. It combines all of Nike's most recent innovations, such as improved cushioning and ankle support, into one sneaker.

3 JUMP, MAN

The familiar logo is nearly hidden on the top and bottom of the toe and can be seen best only from certain angles, such as from the eyes of a defender as someone dunks over him.

4 MASTER CLASS

Jordan asked Hatfield to design the AJXXX and was consulted throughout the process. When stuck, Hatfield (*left*) says, "you really go back to the well. The well? Michael Jordan."

—Matt Dollinger



Snow Daze

LAST TUESDAY, DUQUESNE'S men's basketball team flew from Pittsburgh to Virginia for games against VCU and George Mason. The flight took one hour. The Dukes planned to drive back after Friday's game, against the Patriots, a trip that usually takes four hours. Instead, winter storm Jonas dumped three feet of snow on the area, leaving their bus stuck for 22 hours on the Pennsylvania Turnpike.



4:30 p.m., Friday The Dukes leave Fairfax fresh off an 86-75 win at George Mason. The game had been moved up a day in anticipation of the storm.

9:15 p.m. Their bus gets stuck between Bedford and Somerset, Pa., 80 miles from campus.

11:20 p.m. As players pass time by playing Heads-up, an iPhone game similar to charades, a Twitter poll suggests that the team's



walk-ons get out and push the bus.

10:30 a.m., Saturday The Dukes hang out on the also-stuck bus of a group of Iowa middle schoolers.

11:45 a.m. A local fire department arrives via ATV to deliver bottles of water.

12:30 p.m. Coaches walk to an overpass hoping to get pizza dropped down by a local store. The plan fails.

1 p.m. EMS drives the coaches to a grocery store to stock up on food and water for the players and the kids from Iowa.



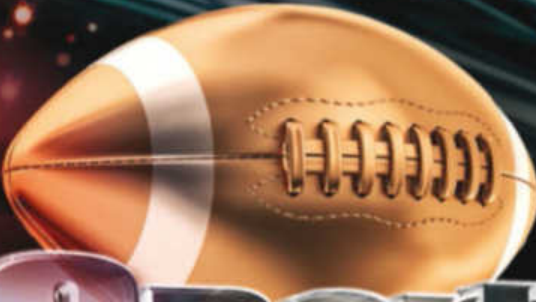
7:29 p.m. The bus starts to move after players use pizza boxes and garbage cans to shovel snow.

7:35 p.m. The bus gets stuck again.



7:40 p.m. The bus rolls again, leaving the turnpike and backtracking to take a different route.

10:54 p.m. The Dukes arrive on campus.



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Penalty Phase

LAST MONTH ESPN suspended on-air personality Bob Ryan for making disparaging remarks about ESPN NBA analyst Mark Jackson while appearing on Dan Le Batard's ESPN radio show. So how does Ryan's two-week time-out compare with other ESPN disciplinary acts? Match the perp with the crime and the time.

THE LINEUP

1



**BILL
SIMMONS**

2



**MAX
BRETOS**

3



**TEDDY
ATLAS**

4



**TONY
KORNHEISER**

5



**KEITH
OLBERMANN**

6



**DAN
LE BATARD**

THE INFRACTIONS

A.

Two weeks for calling Bristol, Conn., a godforsaken place

B.

Two weeks for commenting on Hannah Storm's wardrobe

C.

One week for arguing with a program director

D.

Thirty days for using "chink in the armor" while discussing Jeremy Lin's game

E.

Two days for renting a billboard to mock LeBron James

F.

Three weeks for criticizing Roger Goodell

ANSWER KEY: E E/A/6/6, 1, F/F/2/D/3/C/4/B/5/A/4/6, 1

**THEY
SAID IT**

"WELL, I SURE AS HELL DON'T WANT IT TO BE ME STANDING AT THE \$2 WINDOW AT TURFWAY."

Pete Rose

Reds great, who was selected for the team's hall of fame on Jan. 19, when asked how he'd like to be depicted in a statue that will be placed outside Great American Ball Park.



SIGN OF THE APOCALYPSE

While in New York to play the Nets, Thunder forward Steve Novak ordered a room-service latte at the Trump Soho, for which he was charged \$20.67.

Jason Dufner

Won his first PGA Tour event since 2013: It's called the CareerBuilder Challenge.



**HOT
NOT**



SMU

Dropped to 18-1 after Sunday's 89-80 loss to Temple. Too bad, a no-loss, nontournament team would have been fun.

**Natalie Snodgrass** | *Eagan, Minn.* | *Hockey*

Natalie, a junior forward at Eastview High, scored twice in a 3–2 win over Canada, leading the U.S. to gold at the under-18 world championships in St. Catharines, Ont. She had the tying score in the third period, then backhanded a loose puck into the net from the top of the crease at 1:47 in overtime. Natalie will play at Connecticut.

**Jordan McFarland** | *Waterloo, Ill.* | *Baseball*

Jordan, a senior outfielder at Waterloo High and a member of the St. Louis Pirates club team, was named the 17-and-under player of the year by Perfect Game USA. He batted .571 and slugged .905 in three showcase tournaments, with a .627 on-base percentage. Jordan hit .427 at Gibault Catholic High last year. He will compete at Arkansas.

**Akela Jones** | *St. Michael, Barbados* | *Indoor Track and Field*

Jones, a senior at Kansas State, won the pentathlon at the DeLoss Dodds Invitational with 4,643 points, the second-best NCAA score ever, including wins in the 60-meter hurdles, high jump and long jump. Two weeks earlier the defending NCAA heptathlon champ set a personal record of 6' 1½" in the high jump, tied for tops in the nation this season.

FACES IN THE CROWD

Edited By ALEXANDRA FENWICK

**Brannon Kidder** | *Lancaster, Ohio* | *Indoor Track and Field*

Kidder, a senior at Penn State, set an NCAA record in the 1,000 meters with a time of 2:18.26 at the Nittany Lion Challenge in University Park, Pa. He pulled away in the final 75 meters to win by 3.63 seconds in his first time running the event. Last year Kidder was runner-up in the 800 at the NCAA outdoor nationals with a 1:49.36.

**Kristen Spolyar** | *Lebanon, Ind.* | *Basketball*

Kristen, a 5' 11" guard at Lebanon High, scored 44 points in a 78–67 win over Danville High for 2,630 career points (since extended to 2,660) to break the school record of 2,595 set by Rick Mount, the former ABA guard and the first high school athlete to appear on SI's cover (Feb. 14, 1966). Kristen is averaging 36.8 points through Sunday. She will play at Butler.

**Nick Sommer** | *Rockton, Ill.* | *Bowling*

Nick, a sophomore at Hononegah High, set a national record with a 252.11 season average after rolling a 739 at Viking Lanes in South Beloit to lead the undefeated Indians over Guilford High of Rockford for the Northern Illinois Conference–10 title. Over 27 games Nick had high scores of 299 and 300, and two 800 series (816 and 824).



OBITUARY

Sporting Scion

Dave Sime, once considered “the world’s fastest human” and a one-time **SPORTS ILLUSTRATED** coverman, died Jan. 12 of a heart attack at the age of 79. In 1956 he set a world indoor record in the 100-yard dash (9.50 seconds) as a premed student attending Duke on a baseball scholarship. After winning silver in the 100-meters at the 1960 Olympics, Sime (*above, left*) spawned an athletic dynasty: His daughter Lisa (**FACES IN THE CROWD**, March 17, 1986), was a soccer standout at Stanford, where she met her husband, former NFL wideout, Ed McCaffrey. Their son Christian, who once called his grandfather “the most interesting man in the world,” was a Heisman-finalist running back at Stanford this season. “Winning can’t be overemphasized,” Sime told SI in 1956. “It’s the most important thing in sports—as long as you also know how to lose.”

—Shannon Lane

Nominate Now ▼

To submit a candidate for Faces in the Crowd, go to SI.com/faces. For more on outstanding amateur athletes, follow [@SI_Faces](https://twitter.com/SI_Faces) on Twitter.



JUST MY TYPE

→ Interview by **DAN PATRICK**

DAN PATRICK: *What was the reaction to the article in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, where you were quoted as saying that if you could go back, you wouldn't play football?*

ANTWAAN RANDLE EL: The article is real. But I want people to realize that I'm in no way dying, keeling over, struggling to get around or anything like that. If you look at the article, I expressed that sometimes I have these pains [in my legs] when it comes to going up and down the stairs. Sometimes I have to put two feet on each step going down the stairs because of the pain in my knees, ankles and feet. And the memory [loss] thing, that could also be because I have six kids. I have a lot going on. I helped to start a high school [Virginia Academy in Ashburn, Va., where he is an athletic director]. But because I played football, some of this memory loss gives me concern that [it] came from some of the hits I took.

DP: *Did you hide injuries when you were playing?*

ARE: I played injured. That's part of it. Having the knowledge that I have now, I wouldn't have. When I got dinged and I knew I was concussed, I should have stepped out of the game.



ANTWAAN RANDLE EL

SECOND THOUGHTS

The 36-year-old former wide receiver appreciates his time in the NFL but may be paying for the hits he took, causing him to fear what the future might hold.

That's one thing I want to teach the young folks—the Pop Warner, high school and college kids—and let them know that if you get nicked up, it's O.K. to come out.

DP: *Was it worth it?*

ARE: I look back on the things I experienced—winning the Super Bowl [with the Steelers in 2006] and being compensated the way that I was for nine seasons [a total of \$22.3 million in salary]—it certainly has given me this idea that playing football has been worth it. But when I look at the pain I experience now, I always think, Could I have taken another path? [Randle El, an outfielder, was the Cubs' 14th-round pick in 1997.]

DP: *The Broncos recently accused your former quarterback Ben Roethlisberger of playing up his injuries.*

ARE: Nonsense. When Ben is injured, he's injured. He's not going to fabricate any injuries. He's a guy I saw work through injuries and play extremely well. We got to one point where we'd say, "Ben, you play better when you're hurt."

DP: *What about your comment that football might not exist 20 or 25 years from now?*

ARE: You have so many kids on the younger level stepping away from the contact and saying they want to play flag football or not play football at all. [Participation] will dissipate if there's not some better teaching in terms of safety. □

GUEST SHOTS SAY WHAT?

NFL Network analyst **Marshall Faulk** has an idea for Peyton Manning after he



retires. "Does the Manning family try to buy a team?" Faulk asked. "How about the Saints? Their owners, the Bensons, are fighting over ownership. I'm sure between Eli, Archie and Peyton there's enough there for them to acquire one." ... Former NBA



coach and current ESPN analyst

Jeff Van Gundy doesn't like when teams foul poor free throw shooters intentionally. "Fouling should never be rewarded," Van Gundy said. "Fouling is not a skill. I don't think you should ever be able to benefit from fouling." ... Bills



Hall of Fame QB **Jim Kelly** offered his opinion on ESPN's 30 for 30 documentary on Buffalo's four straight Super Bowl losses. "I enjoyed it, but I didn't like the title," Kelly told me. "Four Falls of Buffalo? O.K., bud, we know we fell. But we got back up."



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A photograph of a Denver Broncos game. In the foreground, a Broncos player in an orange jersey with the number 33 and the name 'KEU' on the back is standing. To his right, another Broncos player in an orange jersey with the number 21 and the name 'TALIB' on the back is lying on the grass, holding a football. A player in a white jersey with the number 11 and the name 'Edelman' on the back is also lying on the grass. The background shows other players and a crowd of spectators.

LA-D-FR



PATS OFF

Even with injuries to one corner and both safeties, Denver's secondary—especially Talib—neutralized Edelman (11), who had just 53 yards and no TDs.



IGGIN'—DA

***BRADY-MANNING? THAT
STORY'S SO OLD. THE BRONCOS
GOT BACK TO THE SUPER BOWL
BY CHANGING THE SCRIPT.
THE NEW PLOT POINTS:
A COACH WHO WON'T QUIT,
A NEAR-PERFECT PUNTER...
AND (GET READY, CAM) THAT
PRESSURE-COOKER DEFENSE***

BY GREG BISHOP

Photograph by **Donald Miralle**
For Sports Illustrated



AS BEDLAM UNFOLDED around him, Von Miller needed to sit down. He wanted a respite after a defensive performance that ranked among the greatest in playoff history, after an AFC championship game that remained in doubt until the final seconds, after an old Peyton Manning had become *the old Peyton Manning* once again.

The Broncos' sack savant settled into a chair in the corner of his locker room Sunday night, away from the discarded confetti and the teammates shouting at TV cameras, away from the rapper T.I. Miller wore oversized Sally Jessy Raphael glasses and two gold chains studded with diamonds as he kicked up his white designer sneakers. He had grand plans for the evening: a party with teammates in his 3,800-square-foot basement, which he calls Club 58, after his jersey number—a man cave with eight TVs, a projection screen, a pool table, a Pop-A-Shot machine and bar stools sturdy enough to support 350-pound linemen. He had even grander plans for two weeks hence: a date with the Panthers in Super Bowl 50.

For the previous four hours Miller and the Broncos' defense had terrorized the Patriots, combining for four sacks and 23 quarterback hits (the most by any team this season) while intercepting Tom Brady twice. Cornerback Bradley Roby had snagged a tipped Brady pass on a two-point-conversion attempt with 12 seconds remaining to cement a 20–18 triumph. DeMarcus Ware, Miller's idol and the other half of the best pass-rush tandem in football, had secured the first Super Bowl appearance of his 11-year career.

Afterward Miller needed a moment. He needed time to process the run that had started when the Broncos installed their legendary QB, John Elway, as vice president in 2011. And how Elway had made Miller his first draft pick. And how Elway stuck with the 39-year-old Manning throughout an abysmal season so that Manning could become the oldest passer in football history to take a team to the Super Bowl. The previous oldest? Elway, in 1999, at 38. "I just knew," Miller said. "All week I felt so confident—I knew we were going to win."

Count Miller in the minority. Few had predicted a Denver victory. Fewer predicted how it would happen. The buildup, with its roughly 8,934 infographics, focused on Brady-Manning XVII, on the rivalry that never seems to end. But Manning's Last Stand—what retired quarterback Trent Dilfer called his "John Wayne moment"—was in the end decided by a former quarterback who 13 years ago converted to tight end; by a cornerback who played with a bum shoulder; by a punter who might have been the most valuable Bronco on the day; and by a silver-haired defensive coordinator who drew up an epic game plan at the ripe old age of 68.

"That," Miller said, "has kind of been our season."

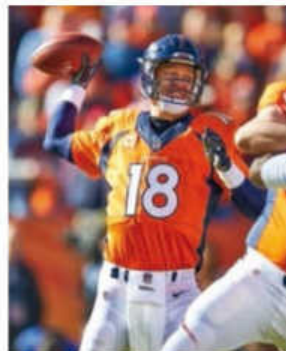
T HE PATRIOTS WON the coin toss and elected to receive. That was the first unexpected thing that happened Sunday. The decision portended a confidence in their game plan, a desire to vault to an early lead and force the plodding Broncos and their ancient QB to throw.

Only Manning did throw. After a stop on the Patriots' opening drive, his passes pushed Denver down the field, and on second-and-11 from New England's 21, he found tight end Owen Daniels, who'd spent one season at Wisconsin playing QB, in blown coverage against a linebacker. Touchdown.

The second unexpected thing that happened on Sunday was a one-yard first-quarter TD plunge by Patriots running back Steven Jackson—the same Jackson, plucked from his couch one month ago, who made \$114,117 this season (or about what Brady might command for a speaking engagement). Even more unexpected—and ultimately far more important—was what

STRESS FRACTURED

Pressure from all angles knocked Brady off his game. Manning, meanwhile, managed just fine: two TDs, no INTs.



followed, a missed extra point by Stephen Gostkowski, one of the most accurate kickers in NFL history. And then a fourth surprise: Early in the second quarter Brady, who threw just seven picks in the entire regular season, forced a pass in the direction of tight end Rob Gronkowski. Miller intercepted and returned it to New England's 16. Three plays later Manning again found Daniels for a 12-yard score that put Denver up 14–6.

At halftime, Patriots coach Bill Belichick swapped his blue pullover for a trademark gray hoodie. For luck, or maybe some nacho stain, we'll never know, but the costume change seemed to augur a second act, another comeback. Like, say, last season's Super Bowl victory.

It never materialized. The Broncos chased Brady as if Queen and David Bowie (RIP) were singing "Under Pressure" into the QB's helmet. Punter Britton Colquitt kept the Patriots pinned back near their end zone with nine punts that averaged a hearty 47.0 yards, four of which dropped inside New England's 20.

Brandon McManus's 31-yard field goal extended Denver's lead to 20–12 with 10:02 remaining—and still it seemed perfectly reasonable that some Brady mojo remained. Twice in the final 10 minutes the QB drove inside the Broncos' 20-yard line. And twice the Broncos held on fourth down. The first came when cornerback Chris Harris, playing essentially with one arm because of a bum left shoulder, dragged down receiver Julian Edelman short of the marker. The second came on an incompleteness, with Brady throwing under duress.

Even then the Patriots mounted one final drive. (It helped that Manning and the offense did so little in their



Favre had heard Manning saying all week that he wasn't thinking too far into the future. But he knew better. "You say you're not thinking about the end," said Favre. "But it consumes you."

last two possessions: six plays, three yards gained and two punts). On another fourth down—10 yards to go, from the 50-yard line, with 1:34 left—Brady connected with Gronkowski for 40 yards. On yet another he lobbed a prayer into thin air that Gronkowski corralled for six points after knocking Harris to the ground.

The two-point conversion failed. So did the onside kick, recovered by Shiloh Keo, who leaped into the stands. Confetti showered the field. Edelman limped off. Gostkowski blamed himself for his missed kick, the decisive point: "I feel like I lost the game."

Wade Phillips? He was just lost. Shortly after the last whistle, for reasons unknown, Denver's 68-year-old defensive coordinator retreated to the Broncos' locker room, nearly causing him to miss the championship ceremony that he'd made possible. (A team employee finally fetched him.) Phillips's game plan had seemed inspired by the blueprint Rex Ryan's Jets used to knock the Patriots from the 2011 playoffs: employ six defensive backs, flooding the middle of the field with defenders; play as much man as possible, doubling Gronkowski and

Edelman at every opportunity; and, above all, mix up where the pressure was coming from, play to play. For an offense like the Patriots', which changes as much as any other from week to week, things can fall apart when they see something unexpected on D. It helps, too, that Miller and Ware feasted on a depleted O-line. "That was the most impressive defensive performance for the Broncos I've ever seen," said Shannon Sharpe, Denver's Hall of Fame tight end.

In the end Phillips walked back onto the field wearing only a long-sleeve T-shirt. It was his Bud Grant moment.

ILD? MANNING DROPPED back on a third-and-10 in the third quarter Sunday, saw his receivers covered and rumbled off right tackle like a giraffe on ice skates. Twelve yards and a first down. *Old?* "He was trucking," tackle Ryan Harris laughed.

Meanwhile, Brett Favre watched from his 465-acre farm in Mississippi. Favre had heard Manning saying all week that he wasn't thinking too far into the future. But Favre knew better. He starred in this same movie with the Vikings in 2009, advancing to the NFC title game. (He lost.) "You say you're not thinking about the end," said Favre, on his way to hunt deer. "But it consumes you. You know it's unlikely you'll ever get that chance again."

For Favre, to watch Manning this year was to see another actor channeling his performance in a remake of *The End*—only Manning's drop in velocity was more drastic and noticeable because Manning never had Favre's arm

strength. Favre heard Manning say this year was different than the 16 before it—because of his 17 interceptions in nine weeks, because of the tear in the plantar fascia near his left heel that shelved him for six games. He had looked, Favre said, "sort of un-Peyton-like."

Across the city that adopted Manning when he arrived in 2012, the older and the headed-that-way, those forced like Favre to confront retirement, were compelled to consider what's next. They watched Manning and saw them-

selves. "The fact is, we're all aging," said Amanda Gregg, director of the downtown Office of Aging, a sort of counseling center for senior citizens. That office exists, Gregg says, so that we might see advancing age as less of a negative, more of a benefit. After the Broncos beat the Steelers a week earlier, Harris had called Manning a "game manager." That could be viewed as a drawback—or, on Sunday, an asset.

All of Denver, it seemed, could relate to Manning's hanging on. People like Brian Young, who danced professionally all over the world, through his prime and into his 30s. At 35 now and running a Denver studio, Young can sympathize with the QB. For years Young could easily spring out of bed and bend his body in half, contorting like a pretzel. Now? Only on a good day, after an extensive warmup. His body aches from his toes to his shoulders. That can be depressing, just thinking about the end. "It's not that you can't continue to do what you love," he says. "It's that the joy starts coming out of it. There are days where I'm still strong and locked in—just fewer of them. There are other days where I'm like, *Jesus, I just can't do this anymore.*"

Manning had plenty of those days this season, sprinkled with a few joyful afternoons like Sunday. "As we get older some of our abilities leave us," Sharpe said. "We can't run as fast, can't jump as far. But we don't forget what it is that we know how to do."

Amen, Manning might have said as the Brady-Manning narrative shifted

yet again. Here Manning had won a third straight playoff meeting with his nemesis. He improved to 4–1 in conference championship games and advanced to a fourth Super Bowl. His counterpart in two weeks, Cam Newton, was nine years old when Manning entered the NFL, in 1998.

THE BRONCOS DID not win football games this year so much as they survived them. They went 11–3 in contests decided by seven points or fewer, including Sunday's victory; no team in NFL history won so many nail-biters. Of course they would prefer that outsiders focus on the fact that they won, rather than the how of it all. "I've never had a season like this," said left tackle Ryan Harris, "but I don't look at it as weakness. I think it speaks to our resolve."

Denver's 2015 campaign unfolded with more dramatics than a season of *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*. There was the Manning–or–Brock Osweiler quarterback debate; Manning's injury in November, and the (denied) HGH allegation lobbed at him from Al Jazeera in December; and a secondary that limped down the stretch. And yet there the Broncos were, winning three overtime thrillers, becoming the first to overcome 14-point deficits against three opponents that would make the playoffs.

On Sunday, Denver never trailed. But easy this was not. "This is a great example of what this entire season has been like," Manning said at the podium, his son, Marshall, hiding behind him like a shy tailback. "[There have] been a lot of different people stepping up at different times—starters, nonstarters becoming starters. Everybody did their part."

That seasonlong resiliency validated the decision Elway made after his Broncos got bounced by the Colts in the playoffs a year ago. Elway fired coach John Fox after that game not because Denver lost—he fired Fox because of how lifeless his team looked in doing so. Elway said he wanted players who were "kicking and screaming" until the end. Then he hired an old friend in Gary Kubiak, once his backup with the Broncos and then his offensive coordinator. Kubiak had won three rings as an assistant. He kicked. He screamed. And on Sunday he became the seventh coach in NFL



SEE YA NEXT YEAR?

After 17 encounters, Manning may trail Brady by five wins (six to 11) but he's got him by one touchdown (33 to 32).

history to lead a team to the Super Bowl in his first season with that franchise.

The last time the Broncos reached this cusp, two years ago, they were driven by one of the most prolific offenses in NFL history—and then they fell 35 points short in a Super Bowl beatdown at the hands of the Seahawks. (That Denver D: No. 22 in points, No. 19 in yards.) But on Sunday, Colquitt pointed to the way his team had evolved this season, away from Manning, bolstered by that ferocious D, forged by close games, more balanced and more tested. "We're more three-sided now," he said.

Half an hour later Miller walked out of the stadium, through the tunnel, eyes locked on his iPhone. Sunday would mark this season's final night of Club 58, and while he didn't plan to open shop in Santa Clara, he did hope to add some flair for ambiance next season. Perhaps a replica Lombardi trophy. □



JEFF HAYNES FOR SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

Winslow Townson for
Sports Illustrated



BIG NEWTON

*WITH A REVOLUTIONIZING QB
TO INSPIRE THEM, EVEN A TEAM FULL
OF OUTCASTS AND UNDERACHIEVERS
CAN STRUT INTO SUPER BOWL WEEK
AS THE ODDS-ON FAVORITE*

BY AUSTIN MURPHY





THE VISITORS HAD BEEN exposed, the confetti belched, the George Halas Trophy passed around on the dais by the Panthers, most of whom treated it in the manner of an expectant mother at a baby shower, perhaps having just unwrapped a gravy boat from a well-meaning great aunt: They were pleased to have it but looking forward to something bigger and better—something more *useful*—in the near future.

What this NFC championship game lacked in suspense—Carolina led 24–7 at halftime and was never seriously challenged on its way to a 49–15 mauling of the Cardinals—it made up for in shock value. Arizona’s receivers had been expected to repeatedly scorch a patchwork secondary; Carson Palmer’s playoff butterflies were supposed to have fluttered away; these teams were thought to be evenly matched. Not so much. What we’re learning about Cam Newton, an unprecedented talent who is redefining quarterback play before our eyes, is that he gets better, more dialed in, as the stakes increase. That clutchness stood in contrast Sunday to the play of the Incredible Shrinking Palmer. Stocked though it was with replacement parts, the Panthers’ defense forced the Cardinals’ quarterback into the worst game of his 13-year career.

After an interlude of milling and embracing and taking turns holding the gravy boat, most of Carolina’s players filtered back into the locker room, where they were passed in the tunnel by a small group of teammates returning to the field for a “victory lap.” The rowdiest member of this deputation: Cortland Finnegan, whose excitement was understandable. Until the Panthers signed the 31-year-old cornerback out of retirement on Nov. 30, he’d been overseeing a string of juice bars around Nashville. Finnegan stopped long enough to ask—actually, shout at—a reporter: “How’d Fitzgerald do today? I thought I was the weak link! How’d he do today?”

He wouldn’t have been asking if the news was remotely good for Larry Fitzgerald, Arizona’s 6’ 3”, 218-pound slot receiver. The hero of the Cardinals’ divisional-round win over the Packers was expected to rack up more fat stats working against the 5’ 10”, 190-pound Finnegan. Instead, Fitz was



a nonfactor: four catches for 30 yards, an incomplete pass on a misbegotten trick play and two costly drops (twice his total for the two previous regular seasons combined). Having made his point, Finnegan sprinted out of the tunnel to catch up with his mates, who were high-fiving fans leaning over the railing.

Finnegan’s resentment was not misplaced. He and fellow corner Robert McClain, another free agent signed off the street after Thanksgiving, had spent the week fielding questions about the impending mismatch between Arizona’s corps of stud receivers and a Carolina secondary held together with duct tape and baling wire. But the truth about the best team in the NFL is that it *needs* to believe that people don’t believe. If these guys didn’t have some slight to glom on to, to stoke resentment, to employ as fuel, they’d make one up.

CHRIS KEANE FOR SPORTS ILLUSTRATED (2); RON CHENOV/USA TODAY SPORTS (WARD)

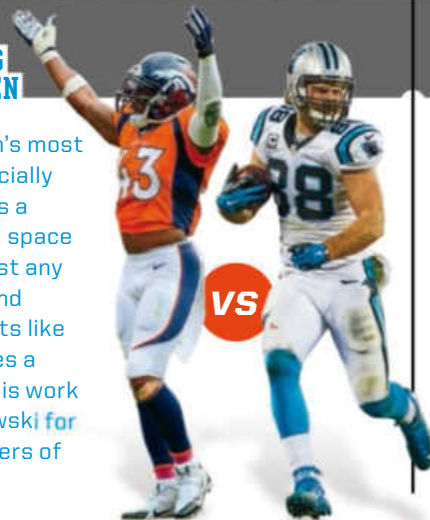


[SUPER BOWL 50] MATCHUPS

THE OUTCOME HINGES ON A SERIES
OF ONE-ON-ONE SKIRMISHES

SS
**T.J.
WARD** vs TE
**GREG
OLSEN**

Olsen is Cam Newton’s most reliable target, especially on third down. He has a great feel for finding space and can thrive against any coverage. At 5’ 10” and 200 pounds, Ward hits like a linebacker and loves a challenge—witness his work against Rob Gronkowski for the first three quarters of the AFC title game.





DAB THEE, COLEMAN

Cast away in Philly and K.C., the corner is soaring in Carolina, where he led the Panthers (and the NFC title game) in INTs.

NOT FAR FROM where Finnegan started his victory lap, Kurt Coleman stood in the end zone holding his three-year-old daughter, Kyla, while his wife, Laura, carried their one-year-old, Karrah. Covering the baby with her own down jacket, Laura stood in short sleeves, shivering and smiling at the same time. The Panthers are the Colemans' fourth team in three years, but it looks as if they've found a home in Charlotte.

After starting 27 games for the Eagles over the previous two seasons, Coleman was benched in 2013 by new coach Chip Kelly, who saw the 5' 11", 200-pound safety as more of a special teams contributor. Working as a reserve for the Chiefs last season, Coleman showed a knack for big hits and big plays—his three picks were half of Kansas City's total of six. Yet the Chiefs let him go

in free agency. "In the end, everything I went through, it forced me to perfect my craft, made me a better player," says Coleman. "And it brought me here."

Ten Panthers were selected for this year's Pro Bowl. It should've been 11. After signing with them last March, Coleman earned the starting free safety job in camp, then went on to lead the team with seven interceptions, not including the pair of Palmer passes he picked off Sunday night.

The first was the real dagger. Newton, who completed 19 of 28 passes for two TDs and a 117.4 rating, had just made what was, by all appearances, his only mistake of the evening, floating a pass over the head of Ed Dickson and into the hands of Cardinals corner Patrick Peterson, whose 72-yard return, to the Panthers' 22, appeared to dramatically reverse the momentum of the game. With just over a minute to play in the first half and Carolina leading 24–7, a TD could have put Arizona back within two scores. Ignoring Fitzgerald, wide-open on a shallow crosser, Palmer instead forced a throw into the end zone, in the direction of John Brown. "I felt the route coming, felt them trying to go over top of me," said Coleman, who climbed the ladder to snag the ball. "And when [Palmer] put it up there, I said, 'Thank you, Lord.'"

That gift was the third of Palmer's six turnovers: four INTs and two fumbles. "I just kept digging us a hole we couldn't get out of," he said afterward.

"Their offense works off timing," said Coleman. "The key was to disrupt the timing, make Carson hold the ball. And I think it worked."

Defensive tackle Kawann Short, who forced the first of Palmer's fumbles, was less diplomatic: "Once you get a couple hits, get in his face, and he misses a couple throws, it's just a matter of time until he folds."

While Palmer's offensive linemen didn't necessarily have his back—he was stripped twice in the pocket—Bruce Arians did. "Carson didn't lose the damn game," growled the Cardinals' coach. "We just didn't play well enough."

Or coach well enough.

BACK ON THE FIELD in the aftermath of the rout, outside the barricades surrounding the stage, a reserved man in a Panthers windbreaker shook some hands and shared some hugs. Something about him looked familiar. Mike Shula shares his father Don's features and temperament. While many around him celebrated boisterously, Carolina's offensive coordinator was taciturn, understated,

JEFF HAYNES FOR SPORTS ILLUSTRATED (DANIELS); ANDY LYONS/GETTY IMAGES (KUECHLY)

DE
DEREK WOLFE vs RG
TRAI TURNER

The Panthers' offense is based on a ground game that uses everything from traditional two-back iso runs to zone reads to QB power sweeps. Turner is their best lineman, a 320-pound butt-kicker with strong hands. Wolfe, whose forte is stopping the run, needs to play Turner to a draw despite giving up 35 pounds.

WR
DEMARIUS THOMAS vs CB
ROBERT MCCLAIN

In six of his nine playoff appearances, Thomas has been basically a no-show, including in both of his games this postseason. A three-time Pro Bowler, he has to make plays, especially when lined up against McClain (signed on Dec. 15 after being out of the league) and not lockdown corner Josh Norman.

TE
OWEN DANIELS vs LB
LUKE KUECHLY

Something's got to give. Daniels had both Broncos touchdowns in the AFC championship game, and Kuechly has returned two picks for TDs this postseason. No linebacker is better at reading the QB's eyes than Kuechly, who can thwart Peyton Manning's plans for Daniels on third down and in the red zone.

CB/ST
KAYVON WEBSTER vs WR/PR
TED GINN JR.

Neither team is known for its special teams, but Ginn—who ran a 4.37 40 in 2007, when he entered the NFL—is dangerous on punt returns and can change momentum quickly. Webster, a gunner with 4.41 speed, knows coverage angles and is an explosive tackler. He's been terrific in this postseason.

—GREG A. BEDARD





GINN AND JUICE

The Panther-turned-Cardinal-turned-Panther gave Carolina a sweet boost with his winding TD.

already thinking, no doubt, about Denver's Von Miller and DeMarcus Ware. Congratulated on the game he'd just called and the attack he has tailored to Newton's talents, Shula was quick to deflect: "It's all about No. 1 and all the stuff he brings to

the table. We ask him to do a lot. . . . That, and we got smart guys with unbelievable character."

Indeed, the marquee matchup of Super Bowl 50 will be the Broncos' top-ranked defense vs. Newton and the Panthers' offense, whose 31.2 points per game led the league. That attack is based on the NFL's most complex and varied ground game (142.6 yards per outing, second in the league). "With Jonathan Stewart, we do a lot of traditional run-game stuff," says center Ryan Kalil. "We do a lot of gap scheme, a lot of zone stuff—and then we have the read-option stuff with Cam."

There was Newton on a zone-read play in the second quarter, freezing outside linebacker Markus Golden, then depositing the ball in the belly of Stewart, who gashed the defense for 17 yards. On the next snap Newton faked a handoff to wideout Corey (Philly) Brown, streaking past on a faux jet sweep, giving again to Stewart, who tore off another 23 yards, down to the one. Newton scored three plays later, dialing up his patented Inspector Gadget sneak, leaping and then extending—and extending, and extending—his arm until the ball broke the plane.

Two more: On a third-and-10 play in the third quarter, with corner Jerraud Powers on the QB's heels but unable to close the gap, Newton swept right for 11 yards. He then scored on a 12-yard quarterback keeper, garnishing the touchdown with an airborne somersault that may or may not have been necessary.

While Newton regained his equilibrium postflip,

then pantomimed pulling his shirt open to expose an imaginary capital S, as seen on Superman's singlet, receiver Ted Ginn Jr. took it upon himself to perform the task usually (but not always) handled by his quarterback. Ginn trotted over to the railing and handed the football to a little girl.

SO SPECTACULAR AND versatile was Ginn as an Ohio State undergrad that the Columbus-based punk band the Dead Schembechlers wrote a song about him in 2006, "Ted Ginn Did Everythin'," which includes these half-screamed lyrics:

*Who built the Sphinx and pyramids? Who built the Eiffel Tower?
Then tore down the Berlin Wall with Marvel superpower?
Who fought off giant asteroids to keep the earth from dyin'?
Who led the troops in World War II and then saved Private Ryan?
Ted Ginn! Ted Ginn! Ted Ginn did everythin'!*



BEST PRACTICES

HOW ONE LINEMAN WON TWO STRAIGHT SUPER BOWL RINGS WITHOUT GETTING ON THE FIELD EITHER SEASON

CAYLIN HAUPTMANN stood on the sideline in his Patriots sweats as his team clung to a 28-24 lead in Super Bowl XLIX. With 70 seconds left, the 6'3", 300-pound Hauptmann watched his former linemates on the Seahawks, with whom he had earned a Super Bowl ring the year before, create the pocket that allowed Russell Wilson to loft a deep fade down the sideline. It would have been a unique accomplishment,

Hauptmann thought—winning two consecutive Super Bowls, with two different teams, without playing a snap for either of them—but that hope seemed dashed when Jermaine Kearse made a spectacular, juggling 33-yard catch at the New England five. "I just fell to the ground," Hauptmann, 24, recalled recently in a Los Angeles café. "My knees buckled. But then I popped up because—hey, it isn't over."

There was Ginn on Sunday, doing a little of everything to stick it to the team that cut him loose last February, one year into a three-year contract. He scored Carolina's first touchdown on a zigzagging reverse that would be recorded as 22 yards but that actually covered closer to 90. He caught two passes for 52 yards, added a sparkling 32-yard punt return and made the TD-saving tackle on Peterson's interception. For good measure he also drew a defensive holding penalty, perpetrated by Peterson, the three-time All-Pro.

Afterward, he admitted that it *was*, in fact, personal between him and Arizona: "I felt like they felt I couldn't do it. They sent me back out to the wolves."

Ginn had arrived in Arizona after spending the 2013 season in Carolina, and the Panthers were glad to have him back—particularly after a knee injury felled WR1 Kelvin Benjamin last August. Having finished last season with 14 catches for 190 yards and no TDs, Ginn racked up 44 receptions this year for 739 yards and a career-high 10 TDs. And while, yes, Ginn has been helped by Panthers receivers coach Ricky Proehl, mostly he's been helped by the

confidence his QB has shown in him—even in the face of some ungodly drops. In addition to his talents as a runner, passer, leader and dancer, the man who most deserves to hoist the 2015 MVP trophy has shown an innate ability to raise the level of play of those around him.

And so Super Sunday will now feature a sublime contrast of 6' 5" quarterbacks: one in the twilight of his career, limited by a creaking body that has long since begun to betray him; the other just now coming into a prime that is likely to include more flips, more awards. That wouldn't surprise Newton, who, before stepping to the podium late Sunday night, tucked his scarf neatly into his suit jacket. *Now* he was ready for his close-up. Asked how he felt, he replied with a smile, without hesitation: "Super." □

In the summer of 2013—three weeks into Hauptmann's rookie stint on the Browns' practice squad—Seattle abruptly signed him to their active roster. It was yet another quiet advance in the career of an undrafted rookie who had worked his way into a scholarship at Florida International by way of College of the Canyons (a juco in Santa Clarita, Calif.) by way of Beverly Hills High by way of one of the most blighted areas in Los Angeles.

"I grew up in the Dorsey [High] district," Hauptmann recalls, "but my mom wasn't going to allow that." At 11, he joined the Beverly Hills Bruins Pop Warner team but could only practice because he consistently exceeded the youth league's weight limit. That experience steered him toward Beverly Hills High—where he dominated defensive linemen for four years.

A year after leaving FIU, Hauptmann stood on the sideline as the Seahawks

whipped Denver 43-8 in Super Bowl XLVIII. Seven months after that, Seattle released Hauptmann, who spent one more day as a Brown before he was signed by the Patriots on Sept. 16, 2014. He collected his weekly \$6,600 check for the remainder of the season, never making what practice players dreamily call "the 53." As New England's collision course with Seattle took shape, coach Bill Belichick and his staff became increasingly interested in learning from the quiet lineman who had practiced for a year against the Seahawks' defense. In the two-week prep period before Super Bowl XLIX, "I was able to give [the Patriots] a sense of what [Seattle's] zone blocking looked like," Hauptmann says. "Guys would ask me what to look for. I'd tell them stuff like, 'On this play they like to cut [block].' A guy like [Pats nosetackle] Vince Wilfork—12 years in—he's not going to get

blindsided if he can avoid it."

That's how cornerbacks Brandon Browner (whose second straight ring was also hanging in the balance as he lined up opposite Kearsse with 26 seconds left) and Malcolm Butler knew that when the Seahawks bunched two receivers in a goal line situation, a pick play to the outside receiver might be

coming. Butler intercepted Wilson's pass with 23 seconds left, ensuring Hauptmann would get a second ring. ("A friend keeps telling me I should wear them all the time and ask every girl I meet to kiss them," Hauptmann says, "but I don't think my fiancée would like that.")

The Pats released Hauptmann last September, and despite his championship pedigree, no one has picked him up since. Even as he works three jobs in L.A.—for a moving company and an insurance company, as well as his own clothing

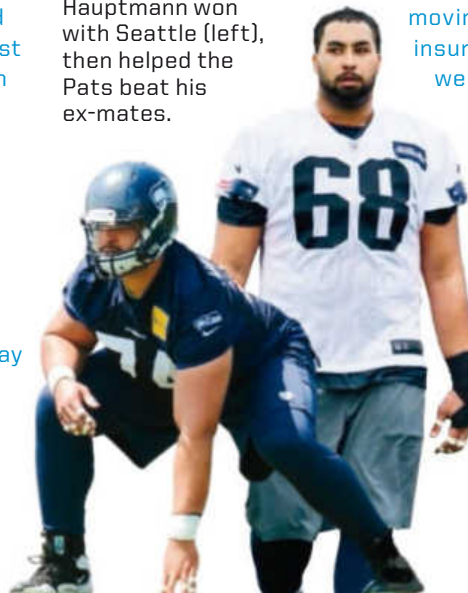
line—he's aware that teams can add practice players at any time during the playoffs. "That's why I still wake up at 5 a.m. and work out," he says. "Practice is where games are won and lost."

—MICHAEL McKNIGHT



DOUBLING UP

Hauptmann won with Seattle (left), then helped the Pats beat his ex-mates.



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SB 100

WIRED

Sports Illustrated

AS SUPER BOWL 100 played out in all its enormity last night, Super Bowl 50 looked tiny by comparison, the way the Earth now looks to our colonists in space. Yet it's instructive to look back on that long-ago spectacle in San Francisco to see just how far the game has come, and society with it.

Fifty years ago, when the Super Bowl was still a modest spectacle watched in a single medium, played by a single gender, contested exclusively by teams from the U.S. and ignored by much of the rest of planet Earth, the title game was nevertheless called a “world championship” by the National Football League, whose very name betrayed a parochial, one-nation interest in what most of the world’s inhabitants knew—if they knew it at all—as “American football.”

That was in 1966, when the NFL was a quaint pastime with relatively low stakes, officiated by human beings who flipped a coin to start every game, used lengths of chain to measure first downs, blew whistles to halt

play and threw yellow handkerchiefs to signal penalties. So primitive was the technology of that benighted age—typing with opposable thumbs was our principal form of communication—that NFL players practiced against stuffed dummies.

In many ways that world was an inversion of our modern planet. In 1966, people drove cars; in 2066, cars drive people. What we call *reality* they called *virtual reality*. In '16, Earthbound people aspired to see the wonders of Mars; last night, Marsbound people longed for the wonders back on Earth, as the NASA and SpaceX colonists lamented the 14-minute broadcast delay of Super Bowl 100, played 140 million miles away in a desert landscape stranger than any on the Red Planet.

For its centennial Super Bowl, the NFL returned to its favorite host city, Las Vegas, which first staged the title game 45 years ago. Super Bowl LV, elderly readers will recall, shared its initials with Las Vegas but also with Louis Vuitton, the luxury brand that paid handsomely to cover game balls in its handbag leather, embossed with its logo. Thus began the long-standing and lucrative practice of pimping out the football, in every sense of that phrase.

And though Super Bowl LV is now ancient history, 2021 remains important as the year that the NFL finally abandoned

SPECIAL REPORT
FROM THE FUTURE

SUPER BOWL 100

THINK NO. 50 WILL BE HUGE? IMAGINE THE 100TH EDITION OF THE BIG GAME. FIRST ASSUMPTION: FOOTBALL STILL EXISTS 50 YEARS FROM NOW

BY STEVE RUSHIN

Illustrations by
Nathan Fox

its nominal objection to sports gambling and awarded Steve Wynn the expansion franchise that became the Las Vegas Centurions. It was a pleasing coincidence that Super Bowl 100 would celebrate the century mark with the Centurions playing in their home stadium, the Macau Palace, which pops up like a Toaster Strudel from beneath Las Vegas Boulevard and retracts between games, turning the area back into a public plaza.

The Centurions' opponent was, of course, AFC Barcelona, the American football subsidiary of the Spanish *fútbol* giant, which brought to the NFL a ready-made legion of loyal supporters. Those fans arrived by supersonic transport from all points of the globe—and some points beyond it—touching down both at McCarran International and at Nevada Extraterrestrial, the spaceport farther out in the desert, where some citizens alighted fresh from their homes in Branson, outer space's first subdivision: a low-orbit Levittown for which the International Space Station served as a kind of model home. Most space-dwellers visiting Vegas for the first time said the pumped-in oxygen and solar-flare carpeting of the casinos were welcome reminders of home.

Even those who don't miss this world said they wouldn't have missed this game for the world. Fifty years ago, before Super Bowl 50 was played, experts predicted that human beings would still attend live events in 2066, even though they could be in the game from the comfort of their couches. "There's still going to be something special about literally *being there*," Jared Smith, the president of Ticketmaster North America, said in 2015.

He was right, of course, which explains all those people arriving at the stadium hours before kickoff in all the usual ways—by autonomous cars

that dropped them off and then valet-parked themselves outside of town, but also on the transcontinental Hyperloop, gliding at 760 mph on a cushion of air through a low-pressure pipeline, as if each passenger were an enormous bank slip tucked into a pneumatic tube at a drive-through teller window in 1967. That was the year the first Super Bowl was played, midway through the first season of *Star Trek*, which was set in a space-age future that now looks insufficiently imagined.

And so hours before Super Bowl 100 kicked off—we persist in using that phrase, long after the NFL abandoned kickoffs—some fans were being dropped off by their cars a mile or more from the stadium, their fitness wearables synced to their car software, both programmed to make their owner walk whenever the day's calories consumed exceeded the day's calories burned.

And calories were comprehensively consumed. The pregame scene offered all the Rockwellian tableaux of the timeless tailgate: children "running" pass patterns on hoverboards (they still don't quite hover, dammit); dads printing out the family's pregame snacks; and grandfathers relaxing in lawn chairs with their marijuana pipes (grill smoke having been replaced by weed smoke as the dominant olfactory tailgate experience).



AT THE FIRST SUPER BOWL, ushers tore tickets. At Super Bowl 50, they scanned them. At Super Bowl 100, fans were retina-scanned on the way in, their eyes swiped with *Men in Black*-style neuralyzers, except that these don't erase your short-term memory. That's the job of the \$75 beers inside.

A mile away, on the Strip, an unshaven cohort of scalpers and touts offered the customary array of contact lenses guaranteed to fool any ocular-based biometric ticketing technology. To judge by their signs, every scalper offered "cheaper peepers" than the next guy, but these lenses were hardly inexpensive, given the global—and nominally interplanetary—interest in Super Bowl 100, which would be "experienced" in some way by a billion people, some of whom paid the \$25,000-and-up face value to attend. (Still included: a complimentary seat cushion.)

Not every "ticket holder" required a seat. This innovation was predicted 50 years ago by Shawn DuBravac, chief economist for the Consumer Electronics Association, when he said, "In sporting events in the future, we'll be able to upgrade and downgrade our seats throughout the game." Standing-room fans of 2066 would be content, DuBravac noted, to watch



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SWIPED WITH
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INSIDE.**



the game on virtual-reality once inside.

And so the VR headsets of 2016 gave way to the VR glasses of '25, which led to VR contact lenses by the mid-'30s, which yielded to the implants of today, just as Ken Perlin predicted. Perlin, professor of computer science at NYU and a leader in the fields of multiperson immersive and mixed-reality environments, told *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED* before Super Bowl 50, "We don't call it virtual reality—we call it *future* reality. Our language always evolves with technology. So in 1995, if someone was on a computer and you asked them what they were doing, they'd say, 'surfing the web.' Now they say, 'reading.'"

In this same way, communication devices in every helmet in 2066 have made the huddle unnecessary, turning what we once called the *no-huddle offense* into just plain *offense*. Likewise, virtual reality (or future reality) has simply become our reality, and fans not content to stand and watch the game in what we once knew as VR can now purchase seats mid-game, whenever other spectators choose to vacate their locations and stroll around Super Bowl 100.

And yes, it's Super Bowl 100. There was a time when the game would have been branded as Super Bowl C. Fifty years ago, at Super Bowl 50, the league

ditched Roman numerals for a year, and it abandoned them for good at Super Bowl 88, when groundskeepers and graphic designers despaired of squeezing an unplayable Scrabble rack—LXXXVIII—onto each 25-yard line, not to mention onto T-shirts. So Roman numerals went the way of the Roman empire, which survives now most conspicuously in the sandaled Centurion on the home team's helmets.

For years, people predicted a Roman-style fall for the NFL, over concussions and CTE. But there were other dystopian possibilities for the league besides extinction. Before Super Bowl 50, Travis Tygart, CEO of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, spoke of the possible future of performance enhancement. "We firmly believe that natural human competition—not having the best chemist—is what gives sport its inherent value," he said. "But [being competitive] in 50 years won't require just the best chemists. You'll have to have the best heart-transplant surgeon who can give you the mechanical heart that will never fail, that will always be under control, even at exhaustion. You [will] end up literally having cyborgs—part human, part machine—competing."

Mercifully, no man with a stainless-steel heart has yet participated in a Super Bowl, with the possible exception of Tom Landry. Still, the sheer volume of technology—the hardware and software—on these magnificent players, and at the fingertips of every coach, and built into every sta-



dium and playing surface, was enough to make some people wonder before Super Bowl 100 if the game would really be contested between men or supermen (and superwomen).

As analytics became more sophisticated, game theory more prevalent and strategy more predictable, football threatened to resemble two supercomputers playing chess against each other—IBM’s Big Blue scarcely distinguishable from the Big Blue of the Giants. But that clearly hasn’t happened. “If you described to someone in the 1880s that there would be this sport called auto racing—when they didn’t yet know what an automobile was—they’d say, ‘That’s not a sport, that’s just technology,’ ” Perlin noted way back in 2015. “And it will be the same with football. What makes it a sport—what makes it compelling human drama—is that there is a person with a human heart and a human brain making decisions, performing brilliantly sometimes, and sometimes failing.”

To say that Perlin was right is an understatement, of course, for we would see all of those things in Super Bowl 100.

THE TRADITIONAL flyover of military fighter jets in Las Vegas was preceded earlier in the week by Barcelona’s arrival via SST, which promises a maximum of nine hours from anywhere in the world to anywhere else in the world, at Mach 3, with a low sonic boom—a vast upgrade on the loud and long-abandoned Concorde, which had to fly, by law, almost exclusively over water. So Super Bowl 100 was also a celebration of the globe-shrinking technology that allowed the NFL to become a truly International Football League, as the two national anthems attested. After a holographic Jimi Hendrix played “The Star-Spangled Banner” on electric guitar—an homage to the first Super Bowl, played in the winter preceding the Summer of Love—the Catalan cellist Pablo Casals, who died in 1973, played “*Els Segadors*,” the anthem of the independent nation of Catalonia.

Game balls were dropped by drone into the still-sure hands of the honorary U.S. captain (73-year-old former Giants receiver Odell Beckham Jr.) and at the gilded feet of the international captain (78-year-old former Barcelona forward Lionel Messi), both men looking fit in middle age. Possession had already been assigned to Las Vegas for having the better regular-season record (17–3), and the Centurions chose to start with the ball at their own 20. The opening kickoff was purely ceremonial—like a first pitch in baseball—a vestige of the time when there were real kickoffs, and kick returns, and kicks carried out of the end zone.

Elimination of the kickoff had the benefit of reducing high-speed collisions and thus head trauma. But it simply wasn’t possible to eradicate concussions in professional football. So large was the public’s appetite for

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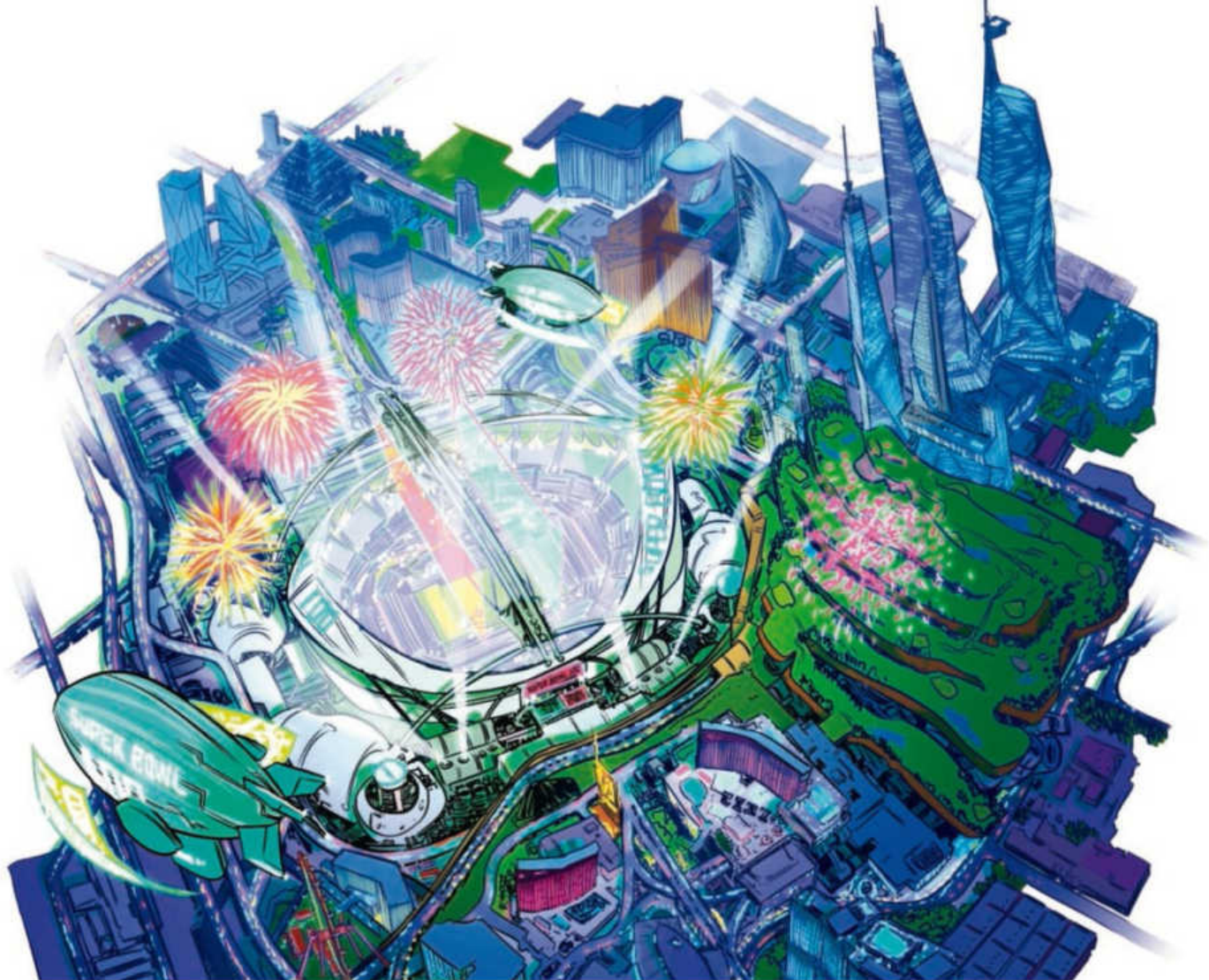
the game—and so lucrative to league owners—that the league had long since resolved to live with concussions and CTE while working to reduce them, which meant either the removal of helmets entirely or the engineering of a new helmet. Creating new materials—wonder substances that hardened on impact, materials that mended themselves—helped the helmet become part of the solution. When Centurions quarterback Kirk James was sacked on the third play of Super Bowl 100, doctors looked at the readout from the EEG computer built into his helmet, and he remained in the game.

Over the years, the league’s increasingly complicated concussion protocol created frequent stoppages and mandatory substitutions, necessitating 90-person rosters, with five-man rotations at quarterback, akin to pitching staffs. This lazy-Susan approach—the QB carousel—was briefly relieved by cloning, a vogue that was abandoned as too costly. Teams eventually realized that creating a duplicate Tom Brady every bit as effective as the original required a duplicate Bill Belichick, an identical Gisele Bündchen and a doppelgänger Gronk.

Still, this rigorous scientific monitoring of the action ultimately allowed professional football to survive, and it changed the model of college athletics. The study of college players by university researchers allowed those athletes to be paid as research subjects, much in the same way that students are paid to participate in psychology experiments. Half a century ago—though it staggers the mind to think of it now—the top football-playing universities profited from the unpaid labor of what they euphemistically called “student-athletes.” But then the early 21st century was a more credulous age, when people would buy into “eight-minute abs” and “personal seat licenses.”

In fact, the biggest change in football over the last 50 years has been in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of head injuries. “We’ll have a completely different way to diagnose [them],” Uzma Samadani, associate professor of neurosurgery at the University of Minnesota, predicted back in 2015, when she was a neurotrauma consultant to the NFL. “A concussion will be like a heart attack,” which is to say: more preventable, and urgently treated on the spot to limit damage.

So Harvard researchers developed an antibody to treat CTE. Today there are blood tests to detect certain proteins for early diagnosis, and helmets include concussion sensors to measure movement of the brain inside the skull. Still, the only thing science knows for certain is that football remains brutal and will never be made fully safe. Removing the Roman numerals did not exempt the Super Bowl from its echoes of gladiatorial Rome.



BARCELONA BROUGHT its continental flair to the Super Bowl, running a variation of the *Côte Ouest* offense made popular in Paris in the 2030s, and took a 7–0 lead on a leaping catch by All-Pro receiver Lynnswann Davis, whose 60-inch vertical from a natural surface is among the best in the league and whose knees are among the highest rated by J.D. Power and Associates.

Fifty years ago Mounir Zok, senior sports technologist with the U.S. Olympic Committee, expressed hope that DNA would someday “resolve once and for all the big debate around whether talent is innate, or whether you can acquire it.” As it turns out, talent is baked into genes, whose variants affect the body’s ability to lay down collagen, which forms ligaments, allowing teams to predict which players are more susceptible to torn ACLs (if they *have* ACLs).

The Centurions quickly tied things up on a 32-yard touchdown dash by Anthony (Autonomous) Carr, who was running on the type of prosthetic legs—what we call “man-machine interfaces”—that have for years allowed amputees and the physically impaired to perform at the highest level in the NFL

and other sports, all the while engendering the usual complaints about competitive advantage.

But *every* player has benefited from robotics and bionics. Fifty years ago Jason Kerestes, a robotics engineer at Boeing Research and Technology, asked, “Would we be practicing against robots and would we be honing our skills as humans by playing against a [being] superior to or a mimic of a human?” The answer, we now know, is a resounding yes. In the lead-up to this game, the offensive line protecting Barça quarterback João Montana practiced, as it has all season, against intelligent automatons—machines that are smarter and more athletic than tackling dummies and blocking sleds.

As time expired in the first half in Las Vegas, Centurions kicker Rae Gal made a 56-yard field goal to give the home team a 10–7 lead. While the presence of women in the NFL has long been recognized as a step forward, it also opened the league to cynical accusations that these new players had an unfair competitive advantage, as doping is more effective in female athletes. But even these accusations were human progress of a sort. Remember: NFL subterfuge used to involve taking the air out of footballs in bathroom stalls.

As the teams headed to their locker rooms, spectators didn’t file out to the nacho-printing stations. Everyone remained rooted to his or her spot for the halftime extravaganza, waiting for Elvis to enter the building.

A ROCKSTARS once looked to space for inspiration—the last century gave us “Rocket Man,” “Space Oddity” and “Intergalactic”—and took names that reflected our national obsession with interstellar travel: Ziggy Stardust, Freddie Mercury, Bill Haley and His Comets. Fifty-two years ago the Super Bowl halftime performer was a man named Peter Hernandez, who had taken the far-out stage name of Bruno Mars. Now that the Red Planet is colonized and space travel is no longer exotic, those names are quaint relics of retro futurism, those unrequited visions of the future that have long since faded into the past.

But as Earthlings endeavored to become multiplanetary, principally through the NASA and SpaceX Martian voyages in the 2030s, they proved that some of these visions do come to pass. And so virtual reality gave way to augmented reality: holograms appearing in our fields of vision, projected through eyeglasses. Thus, the Super Bowl 100 halftime show featured a chorus of holographic Vegas immortals in their prime (Elvis, Sinatra, Wayne Newton, Liberace) performing alongside today’s live Vegas icons (Britney Spears, North West and Blue Ivy Carter, not to mention the Greatest Rock and Roll Band in History, One Direction, now in its 56th year of touring). All this technology transformed sports and pornography until they are sometimes difficult to tell apart: two voyeuristic pursuits inviting spectators to join in.

There were two 20th-century geniuses known by their hooded sweatshirts, and both became synonymous with the Big Game: Belichick, for winning seven rings, and that early investor in augmented reality, Mark Zuckerberg, who posted on his Facebook page five decades ago: “Imagine enjoying a court side seat at a game . . . just by putting on goggles in your home.”

When the augmented reality of halftime ended and the heightened reality of the second half returned, fans at home and in the stadium had a God’s-eye view of the action. With motion-capture sensors on every player, spectators had insight and angles into every movement on the field. When Carr, the Centurions’ back, coughed up the ball on his own two-yard line, everyone could place him- or herself inside the ensuing scrum.

Human officials stood by their posts on the sidelines, also watching the game on implants, quickly spotting that Barcelona had gained possession. (It would score on the next play.) “Fifty years from now, I don’t know that we have human refs,” DuBravac had predicted in 2015. “If two eyes are good, imagine a robot with 60 image sensors.”

Indeed, the sensors built into every playing surface had turned human zebras into on-field obstacles. “We will put pressure sensors in every piece of padding, so you can determine statistically if his knee was down before



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his hand lost the ball,” DuBravac predicted, correctly as it turned out. In the same way, sensors in players’ shoes and on the sidelines showed, definitively, when a player had stepped out-of-bounds.

This precision, however, hasn’t eliminated second-guessing but increased it. Seeing every angle, including those to which players are not privy—hostage as they are to their own points of view—has given fans more information than the principals ever had. Perlin, an architect of this immersive technology, predicted even before Super Bowl 50 that the future would be a Golden Age of Second-Guessing, making 2016 seem like a gentler, less coarse era of human discourse, when talk radio and cable sports hot-take shows were comparatively genteel.

BARCELONA DROVE, its receiving corps easily making the kind of receptions that were once called *one-handed catches* and are now known—thanks to the evolution of man and glove—as *catches*. The Catalans occasionally ran for small gains, paying lip service to the notion that running the ball is still necessary to keep defenses honest, though the increasing size on both sides of the line of scrimmage—tilting toward an average of four bills—has rendered the gaps ever narrower. This girth grew gradually, the way new layers of paint eventually seal a window shut.

Barcelona gained confidence with every five-yard snap. These snaps were once routinely taken under center, until passing became so prevalent that every formation was a so-called shotgun formation, or its truncated cousin, the pistol. NFL offenses finally settled on something in between. Mercifully, given the nation’s still uncontrolled epidemic of gun violence, we simply call it the snap.

The chain gang moved the down-and-distance markers, those cutesy reminders of the league’s humble analog origins, when three men carrying a 10-yard length of chain was deemed sophisticated-enough technology. Of course, the chain gang is merely ornamental now, like the Patriots’ minutemen mascots, because every millimeter of the field is electronically mapped and the ball is spotted accordingly. But the chain gang marches on anyway, a beloved anachronism. These officials are like the palace guards wearing bearskin hats in London, where the NFL first became truly worldly.

For decades the NFL spoke of being a global league, but was about as international as the International House of Pancakes (or less so, since IHOP had outlets in Canada, Mexico and the Middle East). But then came the London Beefeaters—changed to the Doubledeckers after vegans picketed—followed by Mexico City, Toronto, Frankfurt, Barcelona and on and on, the league bifurcat-



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ing into two megaconferences called the National Football League (comprising the old AFC and NFC) and the International Football League (everyone else), guaranteeing an international Super Bowl while also guaranteeing that one U.S. team would always play in it.

In Super Bowl 100 that team, the Centurions, took the ball on its own 20 with scarcely more than a minute left, down 14–10 following Barça's second touchdown. After four quick completions against a porous prevent defense—some things never change—Las Vegas stared down four seconds on the clock, 21 yards to history.

Through his MindTalk device, Montana, the Centurions QB, listened to the affirmations of his team's life coach. We've forgotten now, but these MindTalks were once used only to transmit play calls to a tiny receiver in the mouth guard, which carried the signal vibrations to the teeth, along the jawbone and into the inner ear, where QBs heard an inaudible "inner voice" that told them the play. Now, of course, every player wears such a mouth guard, and coaches transmit not just plays but also affirmations. Montana's inner ear—channeling the voice of Centurions life coach O.G. Willikers in the press box—told him: "Relax. This is the fulfillment of your childhood dreams. You are about to throw the Super Bowl-winning touchdown."

You know the rest. Las Vegas's star receiver, Climbin' Mike Simon, leaped for Montana's arcing pass in the corner of the end zone. The springiness of the artificial turf subflooring, like a sprung floor for dancing, allowed him to bound six feet in the air, but it also softened his landing and protected his knees, at once increasing the safety and the spectacle of professional football. Simon reached up with both hands—it's the two-handed catch that now requires a modifier—and clapped his left palm over the ball in his right, as if slapping a rebound in basketball.

When he came down with the ball, and the ref-bot glowed green to signal the touchdown, pulse rates spiked worldwide. The fans in attendance who had opted to wear biosensors that measured their vital signs—blood oxygen levels and perfusion indices—set a new Super Bowl record for Visceral Reaction Measurement. (Think of it as a kind of decibel level of human emotion.)

Years ago there would have been a replay on a large in-stadium screen called a jumbotron, a name that sounds camp and retro-futuristic to our modern ears. Now, of course, the play was replayed, from an infinity of angles, in our own fields of vision. Barcelona challenged the call, unsuccessfully, claiming that the Centurions had stolen the bio signs of coach Pep Olaguardi by using emotion-reading software to read the mind of the Catalans' defensive coordinator. "Technology in some regards actually enables people to cheat in

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new ways that are difficult for us to anticipate," noted Maurice Schweitzer, professor of Operations, Information and Decisions at the Wharton School, way back in 2015. He now looks like Nostradamus.

The company that developed this software a half-century ago, Affectiva, had 3.2 million faces in its database and could read countless human expressions (though decades ago the technology proved ineffective on Belichick, who had only one expression and possibly only one emotion). But this sort of timeless espionage is the reason some coaches still cover their mouths with laminated play cards that look like Waffle House menus when they speak. (Indeed, this is the only use left for play cards.) It is also why every coach wears a poker face on the sideline, as Bud Grant did nearly 100 years ago.

The play card is not the only charming anachronism that remains. Traditions are still important. And so, by ancient custom, the Centurions accepted the Vince Lombardi Trophy from the commissioner, Chip Goodell, and then—this being Super Bowl 100—were congratulated in person, on the field, by the 51st U.S. Commander in Chief, President Robert Gronkowski.

The Super Bowl MVP was once voted on by a panel of men and women from the media, who wore their lanyards like a scholar's hood. But now, of course, there is a precise mathematical formula—a rigorous set of analytics—that makes the call foolproof. As MVP, Montana took the keys to his new car from a Google vice president who marveled into the microphone that once upon a time, in a long-vanished era of innocence before autonomous vehicles, football players—even Hall of Famers such as Tom Brady and Peyton Manning—were forced to drive their own cars and pump them full of gas. They might as well have given those men horses, or unicycles. The cars now drive us, as God intended, their energy replenished overnight, and no one raps about tight whips or sings about driving Chevys to levees.

But some eternal verities remain. A blimp, filled with gas and named for a tire manufacturer, still floated above the title-game festivities, for no other reason than: We like it like that. For all the benefits of our latest wearables and ingestibles, we still love our dirigibles. The football field still goes to 100, and now, so does the Super Bowl.

It would be foolish to imagine what Super Bowl 150 might look like—who could possibly forecast 50 years down the road?—though it is always in our nature to wonder. In some ways, the future is a kind of eternal utopia, full of promises forever out of reach. In Las Vegas, as confetti cannons discharged their ammo into the desert night, the MVP turned to the NFL's own cameras and said, "I'm going to Disney World," where there remains an attraction that fascinates every generation and always will. It's called Tomorrowland. □

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TOWER OF POWER

With a wingspan measured at 7' 8½", the 23-year-old Gobert averages nearly a double double, though his biggest impact is on the defensive end.



PRO
BASKETBALL

THE GOBERT REPORT

BY
BEN REITER

Photograph by
MITCHELL LEFF
Getty Images

READ ALL ABOUT IT: BLOCK BY BLOCK, CENTER RUDY GOBERT (AKA THE STIFLE TOWER) IS CHANGING UTAH'S FORTUNES—AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE TOUGHNESS OF FRENCH PLAYERS

FOR MANY, THE WORDS *French basketball* bring only one image to mind: a lethargic, earthbound big man cowering as Vince Carter leaps over him to complete a thunderous, reputation-ossifying jam. But the perception created by that historic dunk—which came, of course, against the infamous Knicks draft bust Frédéric Weis in the 2000 Olympics in Sydney—is entirely outdated. The French can ball now.

It's not just Tony Parker. This season NBA rosters feature 11 Frenchmen. Eight of them average more than 18 minutes, including shooting guard Nicolas Batum, the Hornets' second-leading scorer; Ian Mahinmi, the regular center for the Pacers; and Evan Fournier, who started 41 of the Magic's first 42 games at shooting guard. The Gallic influence on the league is so pervasive that its French speakers often find that they can no longer use their native tongue to communicate strategy to one another, like Navajo code talkers.

Last season, as if out of nowhere, a new French star emerged as a singular force, not just compared with the rest of his growing legion of countrymen but compared with the entire NBA. When the Jazz traded for the then-21-year-old Rudy Gobert, who had just been picked 27th by the Nuggets, in a draft-night deal in 2013, they thought that his physical attributes—his lithe, 7' 1" frame, his NBA-combine-record 7' 8½" wingspan—might one day add up to something useful.

After a rookie year that Gobert spent mostly folded up on the bench—that is, when he wasn't dispatched to the NBDL's Bakersfield (Calif.) Jam—Utah coach Quin Snyder began giving the Frenchman meaningful minutes. It wasn't long before he

RUDY GOBERT

couldn't stop. Gobert finished fifth in the voting for defensive player of the year in 2014–15, even though he started just 37 games. He also acquired a rabid, nickname-bestowing fan base. While he prefers Gob-zilla to the French Rejection and the outdated Gobert Report, the Stifle Tower seems to be the sobriquet that will stick.

There are many ways to quantify Gobert's impact, but the most illuminating is to look at the performance of the Jazz with and without him. Gobert became Utah's starting center in February 2015, after the team traded Enes Kanter to Oklahoma City, but had to relinquish the role for a month this season because of a sprained left knee. In Gobert's 59 career starts through Sunday, the Jazz were 34–25 and have allowed 92.2 points per game. In the other 66 games they are 23–43 and have given up an average of 99.0 points. In other words Gobert's presence in the paint means the difference between a

hopeless also-ran and a playoff team whose defense is rivaled by only the Spurs'. At week's end Utah, having scuffled through Gobert's injury, was 19–24 and one game out of the final postseason berth in the Western Conference. It is not a stretch to suggest that Gobert is one of the most pivotal players in the NBA.

Gobert's size certainly factors into his dominance—he can touch the backboard more than 27 inches above the rim—but many 7-foot behemoths walk the earth, including Weis. As a boy Gobert used to watch a YouTube video of Carter's dunk, over and over. "Nobody will ever do that to me," he would say to himself, observing how Weis backed down. "Ever." What really separates Gobert from scores of other big men who have preceded him is the same thing that turned him from lanky project to nightly enforcer in what seemed like the blink of an eye, and it's not his rapidly improved strength, timing or ability to avoid fouls. It's that he cares, deeply and often to the point of anger. He views each opponent who slashes into his lane as a personal affront. "Some guys don't have pride," he says. "I do. Sometimes too much."

Gobert is doing his part to upend shopworn ideas about passive, surrendering Frenchmen. "He gets *pissed*, which I like," says Snyder. "Whatever kind of stereotypes Americans have about the French, they don't apply."

Where did this ferocity come from? It started in a city some Parisians haughtily describe as the Milwaukee of France, the Cleveland of France and the What Is Worse Than Cleveland? of France.



GOBERT'S PRESENCE IN THE PAINT MEANS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN



STIFLE IT!

Gobert's shot swatting has inspired sobriquets and helped the Jazz play D at a level rivaled only by Parker (above, far left) and the Spurs.

SAINT-QUENTIN (pop. 56,000), an hour and 40 minutes northeast of Paris by train, is large enough to qualify as a city, but small enough that the mayor makes a habit of approaching visitors, thrusting out his hand and announcing, "I am the mayor."

On a visit to Saint-Quentin last July, a few things were strange. There were very few people in the streets. The lone open business was, not counting a vending machine that sold only eggs, a horse racing betting parlor. And every few minutes the quiet was interrupted by sharp explosions.

It was July 14—Bastille Day. The explosions were the result of firecrackers schoolboys were throwing into empty bins, before scurrying away with their fingers plugging their ears. As Gobert piloted a loaned Citroën Picasso around familiarly winding streets, American hip-hop blasting, he scanned storefronts for an open fireworks shop. Though he was mostly in town to oversee the inaugural Rudy Gobert Basketball Camp, for which 72 young players had signed up, he still wanted to ignite a few bottle rockets. His passenger mentioned that just 10 days before Giants pass rusher Jason Pierre-Paul had lost a finger, as well as a \$60 million contract offer, while setting off fireworks. "Don't worry, I don't like the big ones," Gobert said. "I'll just do a couple."

Unlike many extremely large people, Gobert always seems perfectly at ease with himself and his place in the world. He reclined comfortably in the Citroën's small cabin and deftly manipulated its weird plastic gear-shift. He speaks English well and with confidence, his accent thickening only sporadically, such as when he is discussing the animals he enjoys watching at the zoo back in Salt Lake City (*gor-ee-yas, ree-no-serrus*). And



IN A HOPELESS ALSO-RAN AND A PLAYOFF TEAM.

in the cozy apartment in which his mother, Corinne, raised him before he left at 15 to play for a pro club in Cholet, he easily dipped under doorways that still bear the pencil marks the two used to track his growth—until he was taller than the sill. “When you hit your head on the door a couple of times, you get used to ducking,” he says.

Corinne is a retired cosmetologist, with carefully coiffed blonde hair and lacquered blue fingernails. Rudy wasn’t always so sure of himself, she says. He was an excellent student but would get into fights at school, despite Corinne’s efforts to help him channel his aggression into sports: track and field, boxing, karate, even Ping-Pong. He was drawn to basketball but had little control over his body, which when he was a young teenager wasn’t extraordinarily big. He grew seven inches between ages 15 and 18, and it took him time to adjust. “He could not stand on his legs,” says Philippe Urie, a longtime coach in the French national system. “He could not grab the ball. It was a very tough time for him.”

“He was a guard, could not really handle the ball, could not really shoot,” says his friend Fournier. “He was not that good, to be honest.”

Even when he was a 15-year-old guard who was passed over for a place at INSEP, France’s national sports academy, Gobert believed that he was destined to be not just a big man but also a dominant one. That’s what his father had strived to be. Rudy Bourgarel was born on Guadeloupe, grew to 7 feet and was the backup center in the mid-1980s to 7’ 4” Rik Smits at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. A few years later his own NBA dreams dashed, Bourgarel found himself playing professionally for Saint-Quentin’s periodically successful France Pro-B team. That’s when he met Corinne, then a divorced mother of two. Gobert was born in ’92, but by the time he was three, his parents had split up. His father eventually moved back to Guadeloupe, 4,000 miles away.

Though Gobert can now afford to visit his dad annually, as a child he could do so only about once every three years. He and Corinne maintain

the close, affectionately teasing relationship of what was a two-person unit for many years (his half-siblings are nine and 17 years older), but he says his basketball drive and aggressiveness comes from his father—or, more specifically, from his father’s absence. “Even if he wasn’t there much of the time to teach me stuff, I think I was trying to be a basketball player too, like him,” Gobert says.

While Gobert is refashioning the image of French hoops, it is too much to imagine that the specific alchemy that created him might be repeated. “People are gonna think that everybody is going to be like me—and they’ll be disappointed, next time,” he says in his mother’s red-lit living room. “Everybody is different.”

“*Oui, mon cheri,*” says Corinne. “There is only one like you.”

LATE ON the night of Jan. 22, 2015, the NBA’s Twitter account received an unusual direct message. “I don’t like to complain about stats but my blocks are very important to me,” the message read. “I had 2 clean blocks in the first quarter. And they only counted me 1 please take a look one on ilyasova and one on zaza pachulia. Thanks!”

The sender was Rudy Gobert. His protest was in vain. “I was very mad,” he says. “To be honest, I was trying to pass Anthony Davis in blocks, but then he started blocking like nine shots a night and got too far away from me anyway.” Gobert would finish the season with 189 blocks—11 shy of Davis—for an average of 2.30 per game.

Gobert takes rejection seriously. Dan Clayton, a blogger for SaltCityHoops.com, maintains a running list of all of the players Gobert has blocked. Last week the tally reached 190, representing more than 40% of the league. Gobert claims that he can tell you whether or not he has denied a particular player if you give him a name, and for the most part he can.

LeBron James? “Yes. I did. The next game he skyhooked me.”

Andre Drummond? “I would have, but they called a charge.”

James Harden? “I blocked him. Blocked the s--- out of him.”

Russell Westbrook? “That’s the guy I have the most blocks against! He doesn’t care. He’ll just keep coming at you.”

Gobert also remembers the instances in which his block attempts were spectacularly unsuccessful—and so do many NBA fans, as those events immediately become Dunk of the Year contenders, the clips played

ad nauseam on TV and on social media. One came on March 30, 2015, when 6' 8" Timberwolves guard Andrew Wiggins soared above him for a one-handed slam. Another came two months ago, when the 6' 7" Raptors guard DeMar DeRozan did the same.

What the endlessly looped highlights don't show is what happened later in those games: how Gobert rejected Wiggins on his next dunk attempt in a 20-point Jazz romp and how he forced DeRozan into throwing up an air ball in the late stages of a four-point victory.

"I tell him that I hope there's a poster of someone dunking on you in every city in the NBA," says Snyder. "Because it means he's there. If getting dunked on every now and then is the cost? Net-net, it's going to work out in his favor."

While he does like his blocks—not to mention



we know Rudy's there," says Jazz swingman Gordon Hayward. "And if he doesn't block it he's going to alter it or make them make an extra pass." It is not just Gobert's size and shot blocking that transforms the Jazz when he is on the court, but his relentlessness—his passion.

GOBERT HAD a busy summer. In early September he played in the 24-nation EuroBasket tournament. For France the competition would end in the semifinals with an 80–75 overtime loss to Spain, a game in which the Bulls' Pau Gasol was awarded 18 free throw attempts. Gobert called it the worst defeat

WHAT SEPARATES GOBERT FROM OTHER BIG MEN IS THAT HE CARES, DEEPLY.

his points (9.2 per game through Sunday on 57.8% shooting) and rebounds (10.1)—Gobert's commitment to defense extends beyond a desire to pin new pelts to his wall. He knows that his true impact stems not from the handful of rejections he gets each night but from what he does on all the other possessions. "If you play good defense, most of the time you don't get a block because it doesn't even come to this point," he says. "They don't even come inside, or they throw a high floater or something."

He is, in a sense, like a shutdown cornerback, who might get a few interceptions but who is far more disruptive to offenses by rendering off-limits a great swath of the field—or, in Gobert's case, the paint. "I think it's a really good analogy," says Snyder. "Players may be going to the rim, but they're more conscious of making adjustments to his length. That means taking harder shots."

When opponents do challenge Gobert inside, it generally doesn't turn out well. The NBA's new player-tracking technology reveals that those who take shots at the rim against Gobert were making just 40.3% of them at week's end, the best rate for any defender who is averaging at least 18 minutes. While Gobert ranks second to Heat center Hassan Whiteside in blocks by a significant margin—3.85 to 2.65 per game—Whiteside is allowing opponents to shoot 47.6% at the rim, suggesting that he sells out for rejections more than he should. "Um, I think obviously he's good at blocking shots, for sure, but defense is not only blocking shots," says Gobert.

"When somebody gets beat or we channel somebody to the baseline, give them a drive to the rim,



ALL FOR ONE

As a youngster Rudy was denied a spot in France's basketball academy; now he feels hoops can help unify the country.

of his life, mostly for competitive reasons but partly because of what he knew it represented to some of France's anti-immigrant factions. French basketball mirrors the country's multicultural present—almost all the national team members trace their lineages to France's current or former territories in Africa and the Caribbean—and he puts at least some stock in the sport's power to soothe simmering ethnic tensions in the country. "For some, it's always the same," he says. "When we lose, we're not really French. And when we win, we're French."

First, though, he had his weeklong camp at a school in Saint-Quentin. The 72 campers represented a mix of races, and they tended to favor T-shirts with mysterious English phrases printed on them: UNIVERSITY OF CLEVELAND FIRST ATHLETIC TEAM, and BAD.

When it began to get dark on Bastille Day, most of the kids left the gym to watch the fireworks. Gobert never bought any, and now it was too late. Soon there were only two campers left, neither of whom cleared Gobert's belly button. A half-court game of two-on-one began.

"If I play a game, even a pickup game, maybe at first I'm going to be like, 'O.K., I don't care,'" Gobert says. "But at the end I don't want to lose, and I end up playing hard." At first Gobert was just messing around, tossing up threes and playing soft defense. Then it happened. One boy, with Gobert towering over him, sprang backward and flung a from-the-hip jumper, almost straight up, that just scraped Gobert's fingers. It descended through the net, to the astonishment of both parties.

Gobert nodded at the boy and grimaced. On the next possession he blew past both boys and slammed home a reverse jam that reverberated louder than any of the fireworks outside.

The boys hugged each other with glee. Gobert grinned. "I couldn't leave," he says, "on a loss."

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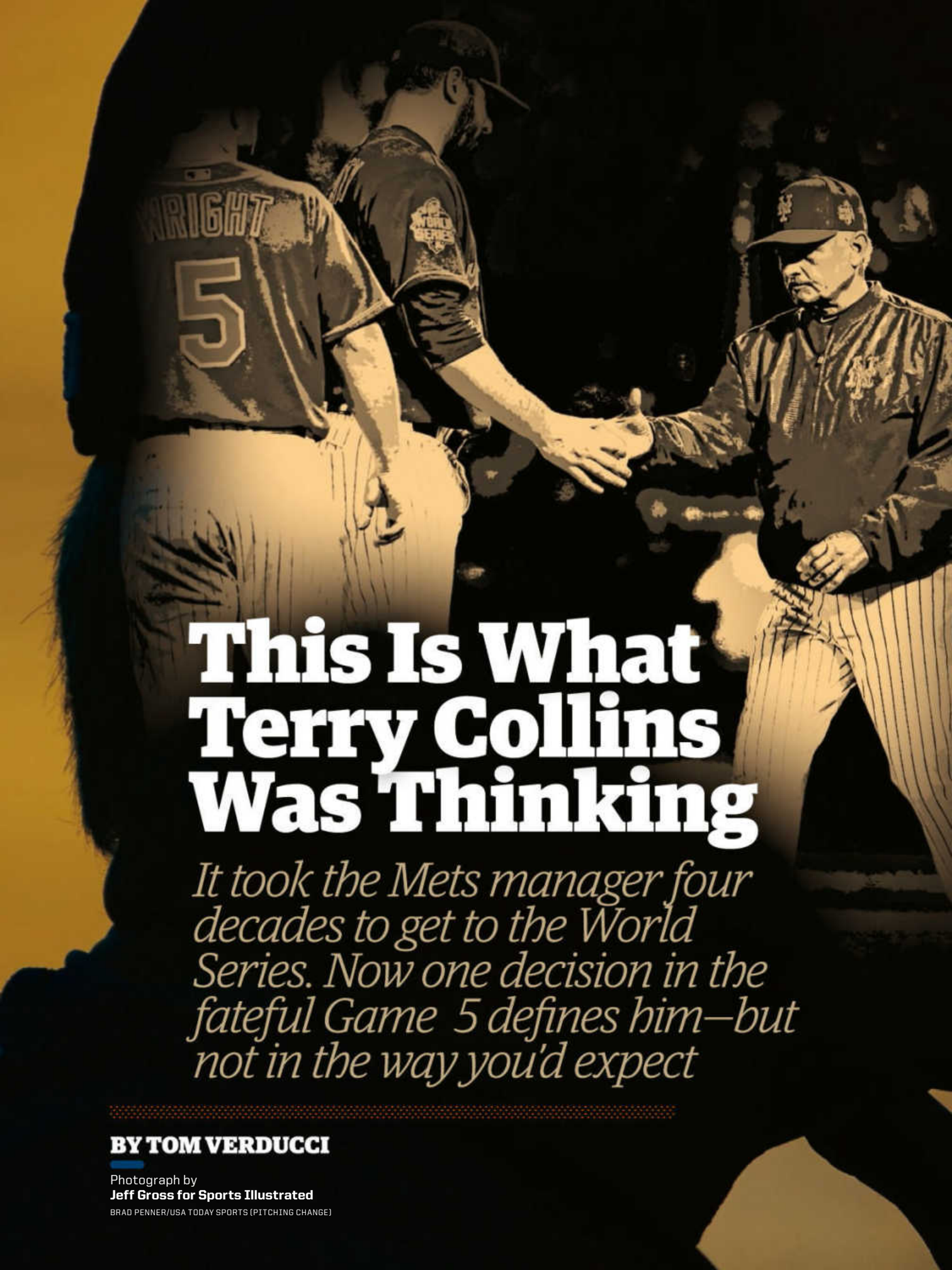
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This Is What Terry Collins Was Thinking

It took the Mets manager four decades to get to the World Series. Now one decision in the fateful Game 5 defines him—but not in the way you'd expect

BY TOM VERDUCCI

Photograph by
Jeff Gross for Sports Illustrated

BRAD PENNER/USA TODAY SPORTS (PITCHING CHANGE)



"NO, NO," TERRY COLLINS said. "I lived it. I don't have to see it anymore."

A tablet sat at the ready, cued up to video of one of the most controversial managerial decisions to ever end a World Series, and, thanks to his ace turned advocate, easily the most visible. It was one month since the Mets manager left Matt Harvey in to pitch the ninth inning of Game 5 against the Royals, and refused to pull him after a leadoff walk.

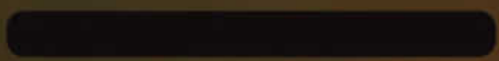
But Collins did look. He watched the video for the first time. He did so for two reasons. One, Collins said he sealed off the pain weeks ago.

"I had my bad three days," he said. "I let it bother me for three days, and I said, 'Look, you've got to move on or you're going to kill yourself over this. It's over.'"

Two, you have to understand the price Collins paid just to be in that dugout. You have to understand what it meant for someone who had been one of baseball's last drill sergeants to look into the eyes of one of his players and defer to his heart.

Three score and six years it took Collins to reach his first World Series. Among all managers, only 2003 Marlins skipper Jack McKeon, then 72 years old, had more life behind him when he finally made it. The 66 years it took Collins, the last five as manager of the Mets, made for an epic travelogue built more on striving and loss than on fame.

The itinerary included three marriages, 13 organizations, managing gigs in Mexico, Venezuela, Japan and Duluth, and so many long nights spent on minor league buses that he learned how to sleep in overhead luggage racks, the one perk of being 5' 9" after constantly hearing he was too small to amount to much. As a minor league infielder, Collins once went 52 days without getting into a game, which wasn't even the low point of his playing career—that would be when he quit baseball at age 29 to go home to Midland, Mich., to play softball.



As Collins stood on the third base line at Kauffman Stadium in Kansas City before Game 1 of the World Series in October, the loss that came to mind was that of his father eight months earlier. Loran (Bud) Collins, a labor relations chief for Dow Chemical in Midland, died at 95 after a lengthy illness. It was a long goodbye, vastly different from when Terry's mother, Choyce, died suddenly 30 years earlier.

Looking up into the triple-decked horseshoe of people, an intimate memory washed over Collins. He remembered a Saturday morning in Midland—the day high school baseball tryouts began—when he walked into the family kitchen and saw on the table a gift from his father: a new baseball glove.

"Standing on that line, that's when I thought about him," Collins said. "*Boy, wouldn't he be excited to see this!* Because I would have made sure [he was there], even though he was 95. He would have gotten to see it firsthand. He'd have been very proud."

There is no happy ending to this story. Not in an obvious way, anyway—not like the one for McKeon, who was rewarded for his own controversial decision to stick with a young ace in the clinching game of a World Series. McKeon started Josh Beckett on short rest in Game 6 at Yankee Stadium. Beckett threw a complete-game shutout.

Harvey retired neither of the two batters Collins let him face in the ninth of Game 5. Both scored, tying the game. The Royals won the Series with five runs in the 12th inning. Collins immediately took the blame for letting Harvey pitch the ninth inning, and still does.

"Certainly the Harvey decision is the only thing that stays with me," he said.

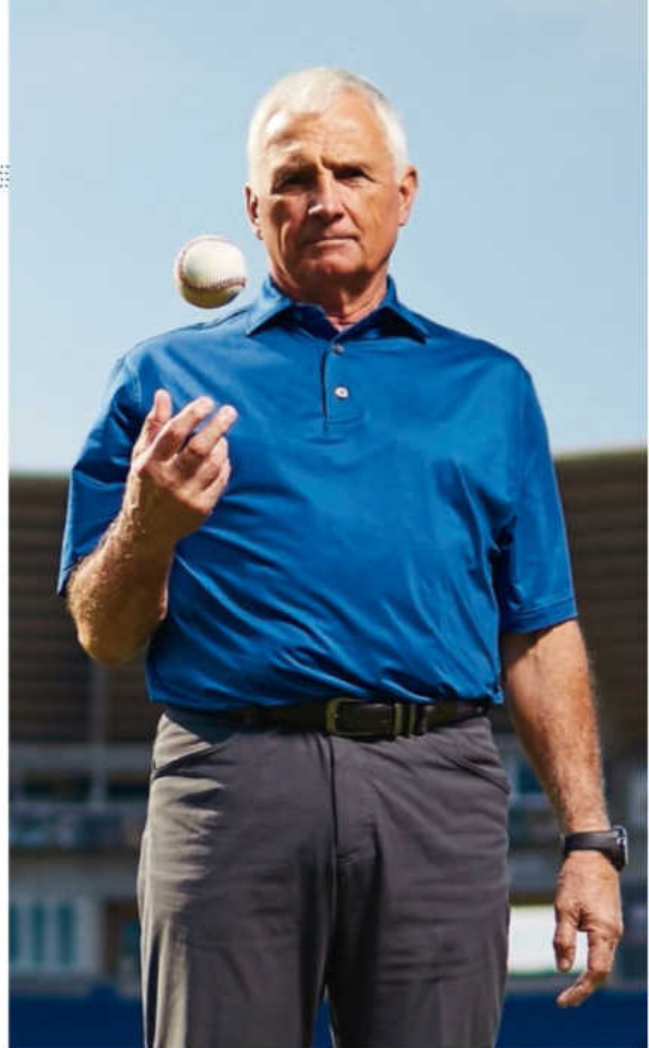
A man spends a lifetime of honest effort trying to get to the World Series, and when he gets there, 16 years after he quit in tears from what he assumed would be his last managing job, he is defined by a decision that blew up on him. It sounds cruelly unfair, until you understand that in that definition you can find more victory than defeat.

Collins and his pitching coach, Dan Warthen, had formed a plan to ward off elimination in Game 5: Harvey would pitch seven innings, and Jeurys Familia, the closer, would pitch the last two. They had talked about it all day, and even the night before, after the Mets lost Game 4.

Harvey, who declined to talk to SPORTS ILLUSTRATED for this story, is as Broadway as baseball gets in New York. Every inning of every Harvey start bubbled with drama, not only because of his attacking pitching style but also because of the machinations and complications that came with pitching his first season after Tommy John surgery. His agent, Scott Boras, hung a sword of Damocles over Harvey's head in September when he suggested that the Mets would be "putting the player in peril" if they let him throw more than 180 innings, a hard innings cap that the agent claimed was set by Harvey's surgeon, James Andrews.

Harvey entered Game 5 with 208 innings. Watching the Mets carefully juggle Harvey's innings was like watching a circus performer juggle chain saws; every move seemed fraught with potential disaster. It showed in the days of rest New York scripted for his last seven starts of the year: 11, five, six, eight, four, nine and four.

That night at Citi Field, however, Harvey was brilliant. Through seven innings he had allowed no runs and four hits while throwing only 93 pitches. He was so good that Collins amended the game plan to allow him to pitch the eighth inning.



Harvey kept mowing down Royals hitters. He cruised through the eighth, getting three fly ball outs on just nine pitches. He looked in control. But in the other dugout, the Royals evaluated Harvey differently.

"We saw in the eighth inning his pitches were getting up," said Kansas City hitting coach Dale Sveum. "His slider was flattening out. It had lost its tilt. We had some pitches to hit and just missed them."

Collins had pushed Harvey one more inning than he had planned. He did not want to risk another. He decided Harvey was done as soon as Ben Zobrist flied out to centerfield for the final out of the eighth. Watching from his perch on the home plate end of the first base dugout, Collins could tell from his pitcher's confident, prowling posture that a confrontation loomed.

"I saw him walk off the field," Collins said, "and he was bound and determined that he was going back out there. I could tell when he walked in the dugout."

Collins turned to his pitching coach. "That's enough. We're going to go to Familia."

"Leave him in," Warthen said.

"Listen, we've talked about if we get to this

"I SAID, 'LOOK, YOU'VE GOT TO MOVE ON OR YOU'RE GOING TO KILL YOURSELF OVER THIS,' " SAYS COLLINS.

PITCH-IMPERFECT MOMENT

Collins—who has second-guessed himself on the decision to let his ace pitch the ninth (but not on his choice to allow him to face Hosmer, far right)—explains that he was swayed by Harvey's passion.



"The wave has changed a little as we speak now," said Leyland, noting how managers often are hired these days with little to no minor league experience. "But one thing you know about somebody that grinds it out in the minor leagues as a manager or coach, is they love the game. That was all over Terry Collins's face: how much he loved the game and he wanted a chance to succeed at it at a higher level, probably not knowing if that chance would ever come."

Collins had managed eight years in the Dodgers' system without once being invited to the major league spring training camp. Leyland immediately asked Collins to help run the Pirates' big league camp, and Collins quickly gained his trust, so much so that Leyland promised to

point, that Jeury's needs to be in the game."

"Well, it's your call, but he's fine."

Warthen left the home plate end of the dugout to deliver the news to Harvey at the opposite end. It did not go well.

"I just glanced down," Collins said. "I saw Matt coming. I said, 'O.K., we got a little discussion on our hands here.'"

Like no other sport, baseball venerates its elders. "Baseball lifer" is a term of endearment, often reserved for the silver-haired veterans who still put on short pants, a numbered jersey and a cap, the same as when they were boys off to play Little League games. This trick of accumulating wisdom but maintaining the illusion of youth can be seen in the long tradition of managers who are identifiable by just one diminutive name that would fit in an elementary school playground: Connie, Bobby, Sparky, Bucky, Casey, Tommy, Tony, Whitey, Billy et al.

Terry Lee Collins may not have needed his given name amended, but a baseball lifer is what he is. This is what first drew Jim Leyland to Collins. Leyland, then the Pittsburgh manager, hired Collins away from the Dodgers to manage Buffalo, the Pirates' Triple A team, for the 1989 season.

consider him whenever a position opened on his staff. He gave Collins his first big league job in 1992 as the Pirates' bullpen coach.

"What happened in my career," Collins said, "would not have happened without Jim Leyland."

Collins had started his pro career with the Pirates as a 19th-round draft pick in 1971, the year after he won the NAIA national championship playing shortstop for Eastern Michigan University. The Pirates released him after three seasons in which he hit .260 with two home runs. Harding Peterson, the Pirates' minor league director, advised Collins to call Bill Schweppe, the Dodgers' vice president of minor league operations. Peterson knew Schweppe had taken a liking to Collins while scouting a game in Waterbury, Conn., home to the Dodgers' Double A affiliate. As the late Schweppe once explained, "I knew he wasn't a prospect because he wasn't playing every game. It wasn't anything he did as far as base hits or anything. It was just the aura he created and the way he did his job."

Schweppe signed Collins to play at Waterbury in 1974 and the next year moved him to Triple A Albuquerque, where he spent four seasons, the last two as a player-coach. Collins averaged only 64 games per year. Stymied at age 29, he quit baseball to return to Midland, where he played shortstop for the Midland McArdle Pontiac-Cadillac fast-pitch softball team.

"I had never played softball before," Collins said.

Midway through the season, the sponsor fired his manager and appointed Collins the player-manager. Collins led the team to the National Fastpitch Softball Championship. It defeated York Barbell of Reading, Pa., 1-0 and 3-1, in the finals in front of 9,500 fans in Midland.

On the field after the title game, Collins told a reporter for the *Midland Daily News*, Paul Neumeyer, that he would not return the following season.

"Why not?" Neumeyer asked.

Replied the 30-year-old softball player in total seriousness, "I want to be a major league manager."

"WHEN I DECIDED TO RESIGN I THOUGHT THIS WAS GOING TO BE IT," COLLINS SAYS. "YOU DON'T WALK AWAY."

You gotta let me stay in the game! You gotta let me stay in the game!"

Collins could see Harvey was agitated.

"Look, we're going to discuss this—you and I—like we always do, and make a decision here. But we're going to calm down here for a second before we discuss this."

"O.K."

"You know, we had this set up to . . ."

Harvey cut him off.

"Terry, this is my night! I gotta get them! I feel fine. I feel great. This is my game. You gotta let me go out there!"

Collins not only heard the words but, as he said, "I saw the passion in his eyes that said, I want this game."

There was one more element Collins considered. Ever since Boras broke the seal on the innings limit controversy, Harvey had pitched under pressure, including inciting the wrath of Mets fans who saw a seemingly healthy ace bailing out on his team when it needed him the most. The *Daily News* called him HARVEY TWO-FACE in a back-page headline. Collins had told Harvey in September, "The only way you're going to get out of this is you pitch good. That'll change everything."

Collins remembered that conversation as Harvey argued with him in the dugout.

"And here was his chance," Collins says. "Here was his chance to do the thing that he wanted to do more than anything, and that is, to win. Win a big game for us and show everybody, Look, what had happened is in the past, and I want to compete, and I want to help this team be successful."

"And so all that flashed through my mind. It's the kid's chance to show everybody who he really is, the guy I know he is. And that's a tremendous competitor, and innings limits are not really something he cares about. All he cares about is winning."

"Fine," Collins told him. "I trust you. You got it. Now go out and get it done."

On Nov. 17, 1993, 14 years after managing the Midland McArdle Pontiac-Cadillac softball team, Collins realized his dream of being a big league manager. The Astros, after interviewing 11 candidates, hired Collins to replace Art Howe.

Even at 44, Collins was an old baseball soul, proudly telling reporters, "How long it took me to get here is a part of what I'm made of."

He was fired after three second-place seasons despite holding the best winning percentage by a manager in franchise history (.532). His team, however, twice faltered down the stretch, an occurrence that would be linked to some players' complaints to the front office about his molten intensity.

Collins was out of work for only four weeks. The Angels, looking for a firm hand, hired him as skipper over such candidates as Sparky Anderson and Joe Maddon, the team's bench coach. The Houston scenario repeated itself in Anaheim: success at a cost. Collins finished in second place in each of his first two seasons before the simmering Angels clubhouse imploded in his third year. The players turned mutinous. Said Maddon, "I remember talking to TC a lot about it, and I tried to advise him what I thought he should do. But—he admitted to it—it was kind of tough

DOWN THE LINE

Collins learned from his long road to the Series, which included stops with (below, from left) the Astros, the Angels, China's WBC team and the Orix Buffaloes en route to Queens.



for him to change at that particular moment."

The situation broke him. With his team having lost 37 of 46 games, including nine in a row, Collins quit. He cried at his farewell press conference. "We were really starting to struggle, and as happens sometimes, fingers started to get pointed in each direction," Collins says. "And at the end I thought, Hey, look, if I'm really the reason why this team's not having success, then it's up to me to leave."

He was 50 years old and, given the taboo of quitting on a team, unlikely to ever manage again. "When I decided to resign I thought this was going to be it," he says. "You don't walk away. These jobs are hard to get. I knew you were better off being fired than you were [resigning]. But I go back to my respect for the game. It was time for me to get out."

Familia was warming in the bullpen as the Mets ended the bottom of the eighth inning. Who would take the mound, Familia or Harvey? The fans at Citi Field chanted, *We want Har-vee! We want Har-vee!*, evoking the fervent audience participation of the Colosseum. Suddenly Harvey bounded up the dugout steps into view. At the sight of its man, the mob exploded. Harvey sprinted to the mound and jumped on it, like a kid playing capture



the flag—as odd a sight as you will ever see from a starting pitcher continuing his work.

“I realized 40,000 people were chanting his name,” Collins says. “That wasn’t part of the decision. The decision was this kid’s passion to go back out there.”

One thought came to Collins as Harvey threw his warmup pitches: *If we get the first guy out, he’s going to finish the game.*

The first batter was Lorenzo Cain. Harvey threw a first-pitch ball but quickly recovered with two called strikes. Behind on the count 1 and 2 to Harvey, Cain was trapped in one of the most hopeless snares a hitter today could face.

Harvey is one of the best pitchers in the game not only because he has elite velocity and command but also because he has four dangerous pitches to finish off hitters—a veritable medicine cabinet of arsenic, lye, cyanide and hemlock. His fastball accounted for a little more than half of his strikeouts in 2015 (57%) according to Brooks Baseball, while he deployed his slider (18%), curveball (14%) and changeup (12%) nearly equally for the other third strikes.

Here is how dire the situation looked for Cain: There are 202 active pitchers who have made at least 50 career starts. A hitter’s chance of getting on base after the count reaches 1 and 2 are worse

against Harvey than they are for all the rest of them—a .167 on-base percentage. (The group average is .230.)

“I think,” Collins said, “he’s going to strike him out.”

Cain took the next pitch for a ball, fouled off the one after that and took another ball. Now the count was full. “When he got to 3 and 2,” Collins says, “I will tell you, the first thing in my mind is, Hey, just don’t walk the guy. Make him swing the bat if he’s going to beat you.”

Harvey decided to throw Cain a slider. He had thrown 19 full-count sliders all season and had missed with four of them. This one also missed.

“Would I have thrown him a slider? No,” Collins says. “But it’s not the pitch. It’s the location of the pitch. If it’s a strike, he gets him out. He may get him out with a fastball. He may not. But I just didn’t . . . When you’re up two runs, I thought you’ve got to make the guy swing. He can’t beat you. He can’t hit a two-run homer. But you know, that’s easy to say after the fact.”

The walk drastically changed the game’s calculus. Collins faced a new decision. Now Harvey was pitching out of the stretch (batters hit 46 points higher against him with runners on than with the bases empty in 2015) after throwing 109 pitches and with the tying run, Eric Hosmer, in the batter’s box.

As much as Collins to this day regrets his decision to send Harvey back to the mound in the ninth, he has no second thoughts about leaving him in after the walk.

“No, no,” Collins says. “I’m not a big believer if you’re going to send a guy out there and the first guy gets on you go get him. If that’s the case, you shouldn’t send him out there to begin with. So I just go, ‘O.K., we’ll get the next guy.’ Because he pitched Hosmer great the entire game.”

Harvey had struck out Hosmer twice and retired him on a ground ball. He had held Hosmer hitless in five career at bats, all in the World Series, with one walk. The two of them had played travel baseball together—they were high school standouts who roomed together in Ohio, as their team won the 2007 Connie Mack World Series. Harvey won the clincher, and Hosmer took home the MVP award.

Cain stole second base easily on the first pitch, a called strike. Hosmer knew about Harvey’s pride and ferocious competitive streak. He knew that after Harvey lost Cain on a slider, and having lost his margin of error, Harvey was going to challenge him. In Hosmer’s mind he reduced Harvey to a one-pitch pitcher.

“I knew he didn’t want to get beat by something other than his fastball,” Hosmer says.

Now Hosmer and Collins pushed all their chips onto the same number on the table: Both bet everything on Harvey’s iron will. But there was one key piece of the new calculus that worked against Collins.

As impressively as Collins can throw a baseball, he is a product of the modern bias against letting starting pitchers throw deep into games. The industry has adopted a philosophy that has pitchers throwing less in order to preserve their arms, while turning more of the game over to deeper, specialized bullpens. Harvey is 26 years old and a tank of a man at 6’ 4” and about 220 pounds, yet he has thrown only one complete game in 115 professional starts. By comparison, Roger Clemens, the similarly built ace Harvey admired in his youth, threw 38 complete games in his first 115 pro starts.

Harvey found himself in a spot for which the Mets had never prepared him. He had faced 1,798 batters in the major leagues but only two of them

"I REALIZED 40,000 PEOPLE WERE CHANTING HIS NAME," COLLINS SAYS. "THAT WASN'T PART OF THE DECISION."

in the ninth inning with a runner on base. And those occurred with far more wiggle room: a 5–0 lead in a meaningless game against Colorado in August 2013, and with a six-run lead against the Yankees last April.

The cold fact was that Harvey had been treated with kid gloves before and after his surgery. He was not a finisher. The batting average against Harvey over his career was .206 from pitches one through 100 but skyrocketed to .373 thereafter. His 111th pitch of the game, in his 216th inning after having thrown none the previous season, was exactly what Hosmer expected: a 94-mph fastball. Hosmer pounced, hammering a long fly ball that carved away from leftfielder Michael Conforto for a double.

"When the ball was hit, I thought we could catch it," Collins says. "And then it really took off on him. And then I said, 'O.K., you know, hopefully we get Familia in here and just hold them for one run and win the game.' I never said, 'Well, I shouldn't have sent him out there.'"

Collins saved that second guess for after the game, after Hosmer had dashed home with the tying run on a wild throw by first baseman Lucas Duda and after the Royals produced another avalanche of a rally in the 12th. Collins walked into the postgame news conference after losing the World Series for which he had waited his whole life and took the blame.

"Sometimes," he said, "you let your heart dictate your mind."

Until the ninth inning of Game 5, Collins spent most of his sprawling baseball life out of the limelight. When Francisco Cabrera of the Braves beat the Pirates with a two-run single in Game 7 of the 1992 National League Championship Series—the only time in baseball postseason history a team went from winning the pennant to losing the pennant on one pitch with one out to go—Collins watched his World Series dream disappear from the Pittsburgh bullpen.

"God, it broke your heart," he says. "It just crushed you. And the walk from the bullpen into the dugout with all those people screaming and going crazy and then to walk into that clubhouse . . . I've never seen a scene like that. They just sat in front of their lockers all stunned."

After he quit as Angels manager, Collins took a job as an advance scout for the Cubs in 2000, as anonymous as baseball jobs get. It was the first of eight jobs in seven organizations over the next 11 years, including stints as manager of the Orix Buffaloes in Japan, the Chinese World Baseball Classic team and the Duluth Huskies, a summer college baseball team he skipped as a favor to a friend.

"If I didn't manage [in the majors] again, I was O.K. with that because I was the one who decided to get out," Collins says.

Then one day following the 2010 season, after Mets general manager Omar Minaya hired him that winter as the team's minor league field coordinator, Sandy Alderson, Minaya's replacement, asked Collins to manage the team.

"I was very surprised," Collins says. "I was very excited about it, to get another opportunity because through the years I have changed as a person and as a baseball guy, changed the way I looked at players, changed the way I went about things and thought, You know what? I'm going to enjoy this more."

"I'm not going to make this such a relentless thing that ultimately the success of the team is going to determine how well I did. It's more, how much can I get the players better?"

A FRIEND IN NEED

Collins owes much of his career to his friend Leyland (left, in 2013), with whom he shares a love for the game even at its lowest levels.



COLLINS SOUGHT out Harvey in the clubhouse after the game. It was a brief meeting.

"I'm proud of you," the manager said.

"Hey, look, I thought it was . . . I needed a . . . I wanted to go back out there."

"I understand. We'll all learn from it."

Minutes later, when Collins sat down to meet the media, the first question was about leaving Harvey in the game. He answered bluntly: "It was my fault." The words came easily to Collins.

"There's no reason to sugarcoat anything," Collins says. "You know, the worst thing you can do is try to make up something that's true because it's going to come off bad. What I said is what happened."

"I know I'm going to face the question a lot more times. But you know what? It's over with."

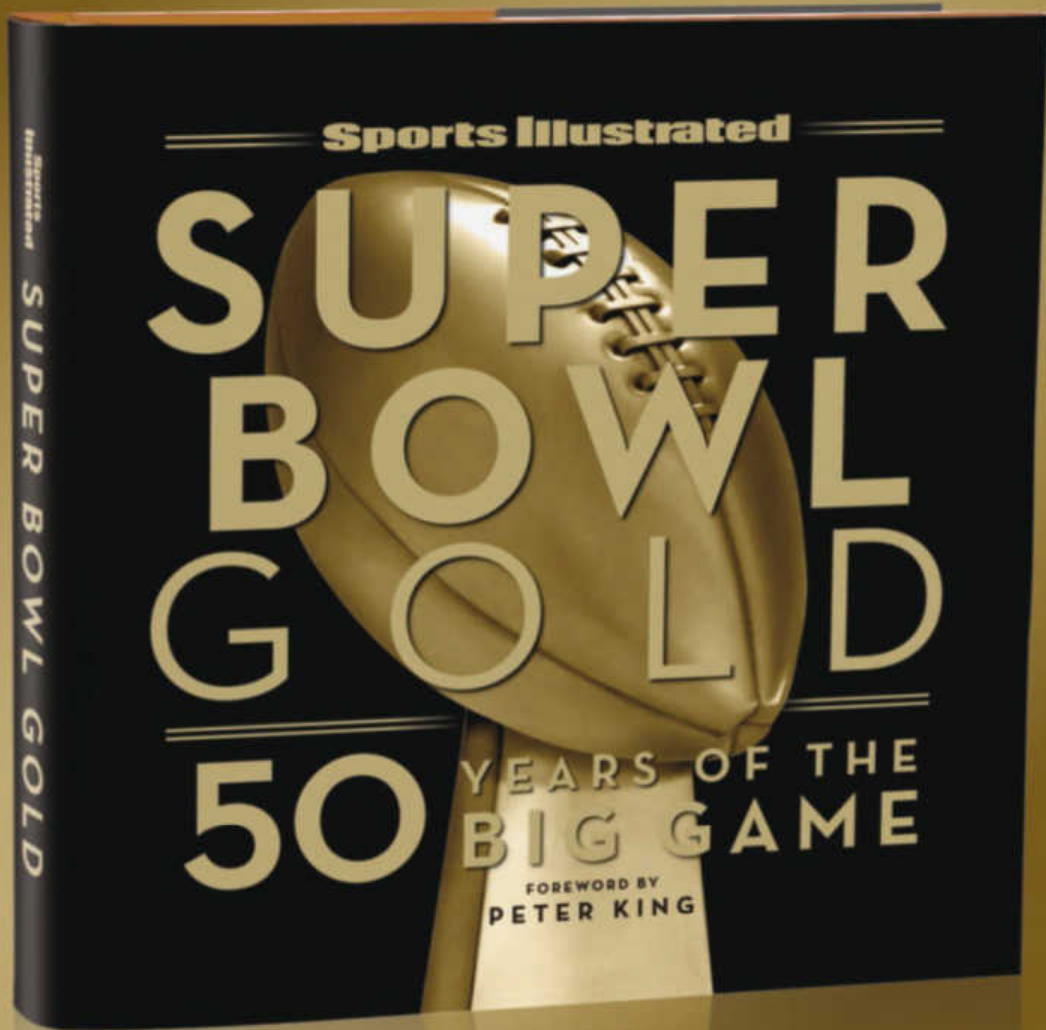
When Collins quit baseball in 1979, his father asked him why.

"Because maybe it's time to get a real job."

"Hey, look," Bud said. "A lot of us, we've had to do jobs because we were required to have jobs. You get to do something you love to do on a daily basis. You've had a ball in your hands since you could walk. If it's not fun, get out. But as long as it's still fun, you should stay with it."

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"HE SHOWED GUTS AND HE SHOWED . . . HUMANITY," SAYS LA RUSSA. "I TOTALLY EMPATHIZE WITH HIM."

So Collins went back to baseball the next year. "Without that advice, I wouldn't be here," he says. "I would have probably been a high school coach someplace and, knowing my personality, would have looked back and said, 'It was my decision to leave, *but* . . . ' I certainly don't regret staying in, even though there were some tough times along the way."

The years softened the baseball lifer. Working for the Dodgers and the Mets as minor league field coordinator changed him. He had never seen rookie ball before, never seen players so raw—16-year-old pitchers who didn't even know what a pitching rubber was. As a failed manager with the Astros and the Angels, Collins wanted players to care as much as he did. He wanted to change them overnight and had no patience when it didn't happen on his time. Seeing the lowest rung on the baseball ladder, Collins learned patience.

When Alderson hired him to manage the Mets, Collins made another significant change. Instead of pushing his players hard, he would empower his clubhouse leaders to create a loose atmosphere. In 2015 those leaders were Harvey, David Wright, Curtis Granderson and Michael Cuddyer.

"I've got to make sure certain guys are having fun here because they will dictate how the clubhouse is run," he says, "and that's what I did wrong in Anaheim."

Says Bill Bavasi, the general manager who hired Collins in Anaheim, "You know when you're talking to Terry you're talking to somebody who's going to tell you the truth. He has the ability to say something in the most frank terms and not offend. I find that incredible, especially in baseball."

"Probably the most impressive thing about Terry is that he has made a conscious effort to do things very differently later in life. That's so difficult for most people—to be one way for so long and then at an older age admit, 'I have to do things differently.' He not only did that, he made it work."

Many of the baseball lifers never had much of a playing career, including Collins, Leyland and Tony La Russa, a kindred spirit who named Collins as one of his All-Star coaches in 2012. "When you're no-names like we were," Leyland says, "you're not going to get the benefit of the doubt until you prove yourself and earn those players' respect."

Collins wears number 10 in honor of Leyland. They talked before, during and after the World Series. Leyland told him he supported his decision to stick with Harvey. "I'll tell you what I think," Leyland says.

THE AFTERMATH

After the Harvey decision backfired, Collins took full responsibility for the Mets' loss.



"Harvey pitched too good. There was no way he could take him out. . . . I know he said he went with his heart instead of his head, but it was one of those freak situations."

Says La Russa, "He showed guts and he showed . . . *humanity*, as the pitcher came out and said, 'Man, I've got to go back out there.' And later on [Harvey] probably should have been out there with a short rope, and once he walked the first guy maybe he shouldn't have faced the second guy, but I totally empathize with him."

Humanity.

It's an interesting word, rarely ascribed to a manager. And it's not a concept you could find on the front pages of the New York tabloids on the morning after the defeat. (AMAZIN' DISGRACE, wailed the *Post*; THE DARKEST KNIGHT, moaned the *News*.) Two days later the Mets gave Collins a two-year contract extension.

"I was pretty tired when the season was over, mentally and physically," Collins says. "I don't think I've ever been that tired before, so I wanted to make sure I rested up this winter because this game deserves all you can give it. At the end of next season, we'll see how it is, and if it's time, it's time. I won't know until then."

Humanity may be the best word for what happened in the dugout on the night of Nov. 1, 2015.

"I've changed enough to know you've got to trust your players," Collins says. "Throughout history there will be decisions you wish you didn't make. I'll get through it. I'll be fine. I look back on all those years in baseball that I've been in. I don't have to apologize for anything. I worked hard for what I got. I've had a great life."

"I still talk to high school kids today, and I talk about chasing dreams, and I truly believe it. The only thing you've got to understand is sometimes they don't come easy. But when you ultimately get there, it's worth every step of the way."

If Collins is defined by the moment when the World Series spotlight finally found him, a moment when victory curdled into defeat, then this baseball lifer is fine with that. What he said 22 years ago upon first getting his dream job as a major league manager is even more true today: "How long it took me to get here is a part of what I'm made of." □

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Troubled Water

→ BY MICHAEL ROSENBERG

WHEN THE PEOPLE of Flint, Mich., learned they would get their water from the town's eponymous river, they thought: *That* river? "If you walk by, the river stinks," says former NFL receiver Courtney Hawkins, a Flint native who now coaches at a high school there. "The river is nasty looking. Just the-smell-and-the-look test . . . a person not being from here would be like, I know good and well they're not talking about hooking up from here. We were in disbelief."

For decades Flint purchased a portion of its water supply from Detroit, but in 2014 the financially strapped city stopped and began drawing water from the river—without using corrosion control to prevent lead from seeping from ancient pipes carrying water into people's homes. But the change saved some money, and who would notice, anyway? Flint, where the poverty rate is 41.5% and 56.6% of the population is African-American, is the America that most of America hides from itself.

Hawkins caught 366 passes over nine NFL seasons, the last in 2000. He started coaching at Flint's Beecher High in '06 for a simple reason: Kids in his hometown needed him. He emphasized academics and instilled discipline and won games, and he tried to be a dam against the decline of a city that has seen its population fall 20% in the last 15 years. In '09, at the nadir of the economic downturn, Flint's unemployment rate was almost 30%. (It's now 9.7%, still nearly twice the national average.) All around the city, lawn signs tout home-alarm systems, even at houses with no alarms. Many residents can't afford the alarm, just the sign. They hope it deters burglars. As Hawkins says, "You gotta do what you gotta do."

These are the people the government was "serving" when it connected to the Flint River. The first boil-water advisory came in August 2014, long before the water crisis became a national story. The *Detroit Free Press* reported in October '14 that General Motors pulled an engine plant off the river feed because the water was corroding its parts. The city kept using it. The water was not good enough for a Cadillac, but it was fine for a child.

Hawkins is fortunate; his home and his school are in the Beecher district, which uses a separate water source. One of his assistant coaches, Frank Gause, is not so lucky. Gause

saw disturbing particles in his water and a brown film on his bathtub after he showered. His daughter's skin got "dry and ashy." He saw open fire hydrants spilling brown water into streets, "but [the city] hadn't said, 'Don't drink the water' yet."

Now Gause sees the fallout of a government-ordered catastrophe. He gets bottled water delivered, but not enough. And he shakes his head at his water bill, which has more than doubled since the switch. "This wouldn't happen in a more affluent county or city," Hawkins says. "The unemployment rate, the poverty, it's almost as if people looked at the city as if it didn't really matter. Nobody should have to live like that in the United States of America."

The extent of the physical damage—lead-contaminated water can lead to brain and kidney damage and learning disabilities in kids—won't be fully understood for years. But the crisis is another blow to the city, another devaluing of Flint lives. You want to see the ripple effect? Try persuading high school kids who have been drinking leaded water that their country will give them a fair shot. As a football coach and athletic director, Hawkins tries to teach skills that will help students build better lives for themselves. "The biggest challenge is changing mind-sets," says Hawkins. "[Kids] start to make what they see into their reality: [They think] this is the best I can do."

Hawkins, 46, and Gause, 47, are old enough to have known a different Flint. They grew up there when the auto plants were thriving, citizens could reasonably expect to pay a mortgage and high school kids could find reason to hope. "Thirty years ago was a different life around here," Gause says. "Now it's close to being a ghost town." You want to believe Flint can be someplace again, but then you turn on the faucet and it hits you: If you can't afford an alarm, it never goes off. □

The
challenge
for a coach
in Flint:
Persuade
kids who
have been
drinking
leaded
water
that their
country will
give them a
fair shot.


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